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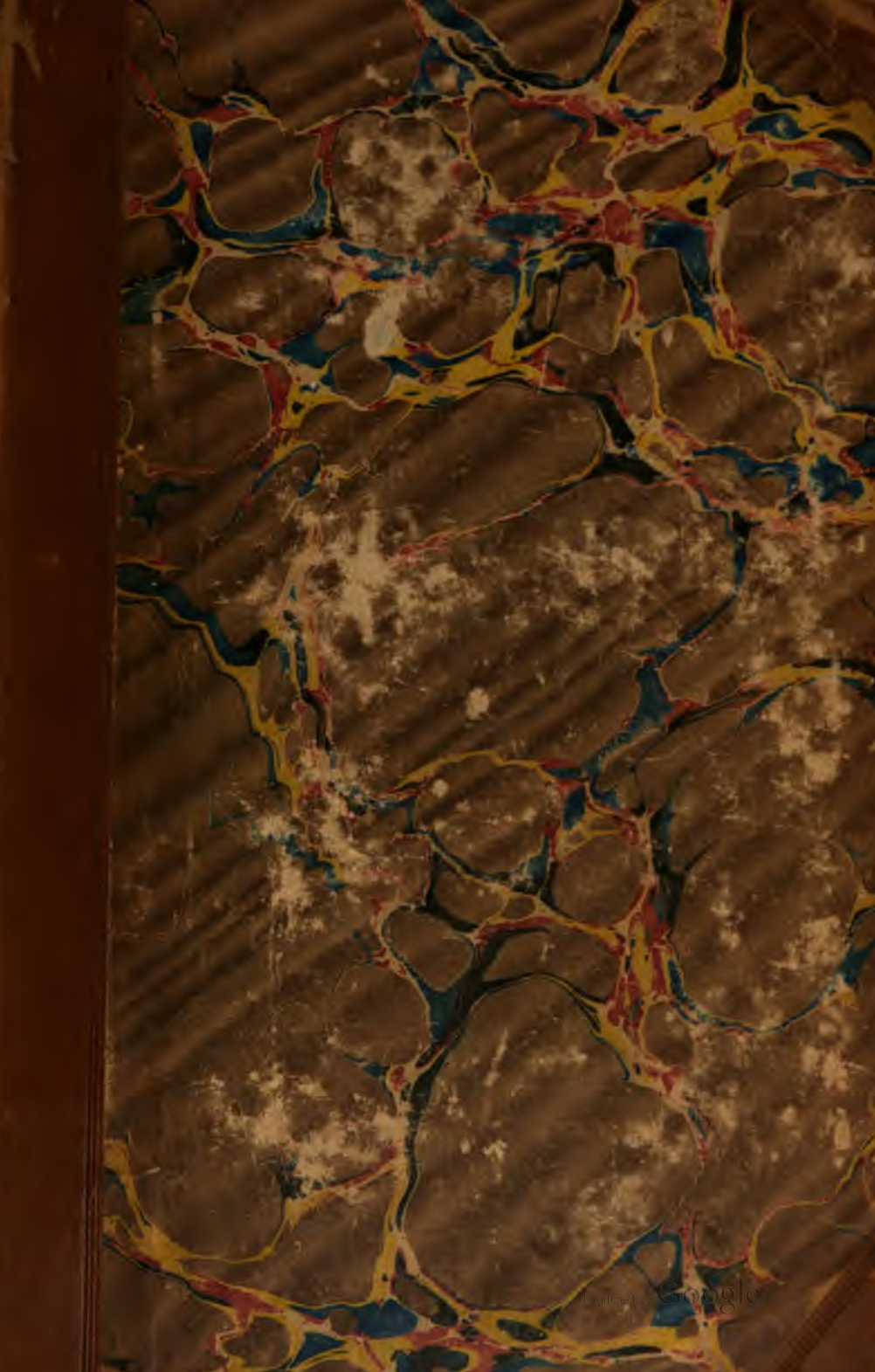
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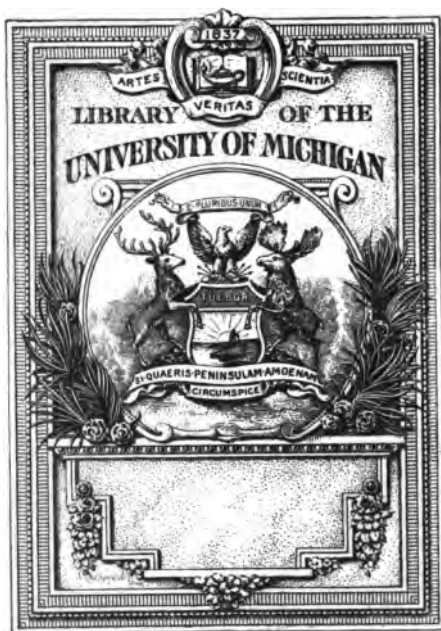
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**AN EXAMINATION**

OF

**OPINIONS MAINTAINED**

IN THE

**"ESSAY ON THE PRINCIPLES OF POPULATION,"**

**BY MALTHUS;**

AND IN THE

**"ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL ECONOMY,"**

**BY RICARDO;**

WITH SOME

**REMARKS**

**IN REPLY TO SIR JAMES GRAHAM'S "ADDRESS TO  
THE LAND-OWNERS."**

---

**By J. C. ROSS.**

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**IN TWO VOLUMES.**

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**VOL. I.**

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**LONDON:**

**J. M. RICHARDSON, 23, CORNHILL.**

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**1827.**



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## P R E F A C E.

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A CELEBRATED "Essay on the Principle of Population, or a View of its past and present Effects on Human Happiness, with an Inquiry into our Prospects respecting the Removal or Mitigation of the *Evils* which it occasions," was given to the world, some time since, by the Rev. T. R. Malthus, Professor of History and Political Economy, in the East-India College, Hertfordshire.

The ostensible objects of that Essay are the general refutation of certain opinions which were entertained by a few persons at the period of the French Revolution, but, particularly, of those contained in a certain work, written by Mr. Godwin, and entitled, "Political Justice." In which work, (as we gather from Mr. Mal-

thus,) Mr. Godwin contends for the equity of a certain social system, which he proposes to be established on the basis of a community of wives and property.

Now, whether the proposed basis be or be not adequate to support the projected superstructure, one thing is clear, that it is merely theoretical. Mr. Malthus steps forward to expose its insufficiency, and commences his exposition by asserting that if such a society were formed, it could not possibly exist during any moderately long period ; because, says he, the power of increase, inherent in the human species, would, under the contemplated circumstances, be fully exerted ; and the consequence would be a greatly augmented population. This enlargement of numbers would occasion distress. The strong would plunder the weak—and the general preservation would lead to the destruction of the new system, and to the re-establishment of one assimilating to the present state of society.

Thus far the reply is quite as theoretical

as the scheme which it controverts ; but Mr. M. proceeds to state that he will produce facts in abundance to prove that, had it not been for the action of certain checks, viz. vice and misery, the earth would long since, by the above-mentioned power of increase, have been peopled to the full extent of its capacity to yield the means of subsistence.

If these facts, adduced by Mr. Malthus, should be thought to afford conclusive evidence of the truth of his statements, concerning the magnitude of the power of increase ; and if they should, therefore, appear to sanction his objections to the practicability of the proposed system ; yet Mr. Godwin might allege that it is not inconsistent with his plan to admit certain regulations, &c. as to the age at which the co-habitation of the sexes should be permitted ; or, if the facts and arguments of Mr. Malthus should be deemed inconclusive, Mr. Godwin might deny the alleged power of increase, and offer to produce facts in support of his denial.\*

\* This, we understand, he has done very fully indeed.

Mr. Godwin's system is open to successful opposition, (so far, at least, as it relates to a community of wives, and a compulsory abandonment of all individual rights of property,) on the principles of morality and of human nature, exclusive of the principle of population. Men must be deeply sunk in the gulf of depravity, ere they can possibly prefer the artificial system of plurality of wives to the pure enjoyment of one. The union of one man with one woman is, most assuredly, the unsophisticated dictate of Nature. Mr. M. does not, however, attempt to refute the propositions of Mr. G. by arguments of this kind, but confines himself to those which he conceives to be founded on the principles of population and political economy.

Without pretending, however, to decide between Mr. M. and Mr. G., we hasten to notice that Mr. M., not satisfied with the attack on the new theory of society, has advanced the novel and unconnected proposition, that certain vices and miseries, which he has exhibited as *restraints* on the power of increase of popu-

lation, must be considered as the real effects of that power itself. We are told that the great error of Mr. G. consists, not so much in under-rating the power of increase conferred on mankind, as in attributing almost all the vices and miseries that prevail in civilized life to human institutions. But, says Mr. M., the truth is, that though human institutions appear to be, and, indeed, often are, the obvious and obtrusive causes of much mischief to society; they are, in reality, light and superficial, compared with those deeper seated causes of evil inevitably resulting from the laws of God, and the constitution that he has given to mankind. Now, all this is evidently different from the mere fact of the existence of the power of increase in population, which forms the subject of debate with Mr. Godwin; and it, therefore, should be supported by proofs distinct from those which simply substantiate such power of increase. Mr. M. does not produce any additional evidence, but ventures on assumption alone to charge the production of vice and misery upon the principle of population, or, in other words, upon the power of procreation;




and then to attack the English poor laws, and the principle of all legal provision for the relief of the poor and the destitute. Thus, a doctrine is maintained which, if practically applied in its full extent, would resolve society into isolated families and individuals, and would produce incalculable wretchedness and wickedness.

But while Mr. M. has neglected to prove this, his main proposition, he has actually disproved it in the most satisfactory manner. For, it is apparent, from almost every case which he has cited, that ignorance, with its consequent defective human institutions, has caused the evils which he attributes to the laws of God and the passions of mankind. It is also equally certain, from some of the cases alluded to, that so far is the principle of population from causing these evils, by any natural and inevitable power or operation which it may be considered to possess or exert, that, in some instances, it has been found necessary and advantageous to give direct encouragements to marriage. These encouragements, says Mr.

M., have enabled the population, which had remained stationary for ages, to make a start forward, and thereafter continue to increase at a rate approaching what is observed to take place in new colonies. Thus, while the *former* part of the Essay is employed as we have just described, the *latter* part abounds with propositions and assertions which have no other foundation than the unsupported declaration that the specified evils are produced by the necessary operation of the principle of population.

We wish to direct the reader's attention particularly to the circumstance, that Mr. M. does not propound this doctrine as one of mere theory, but as one deduced from experience; as it is on this ground that we enter the lists against him in the following sheets. He exhibits an abundance of vice and misery, and requires us to take for granted that such exhibition is "a view of the past and present effects of the principle of population." This we controvert, and maintain it to be, *on his own showing*, a view of the past and present effects of



ignorance, considering that defective human institutions are maintained by partial cunning, amidst general ignorance, or are occasioned by general ignorance alone—ignorance—not of the principle of population, but of the proper modes according to which the means of subsistence and comfort can be produced, increased, and preserved.

We also believe that Mr. M. has fallen into the most egregious mistakes on the nature and effects of taxation and labour. Hence, his arguments and conclusions on these subjects are very frequently irrelevant and unwarranted. He has taken surplus labouring population in England as the text of his orations, and the burden of his melancholy prognostications, at the very time when the number of the working population was 3,313,458, and when this body of labourers was producing the means of subsistence and comfort to an extent sufficiently great to support themselves, and to maintain, in comfortable and, in many instances, luxurious existence, 5,017,434 persons besides! Of the five millions, we will suppose that about two

millions were usefully employed in defending the country—instructing the people—and in performing the various requisite duties of good government; the remaining three millions were either idle or uselessly employed. If, then, there are classes of persons in the community, who are idle or unnecessarily and unproductively occupied, and who are supported by the labour of others, it is clear that they may be reckoned surplus population. But it is equally clear that, in such a state of things, the operative classes cannot be in excess. Even if they produced no more than barely enough for their own consumption and for the maintenance of those who are essential to their protection, &c. there can be no ground for supposing that the number of these persons is too great. If, then, they are not only producing the necessities of life for themselves, but also affording, to millions of others, the necessities—the comforts—the elegances—and the luxuries of life—how can they be fairly considered as too numerous? The bare supposition involves an utter absurdity.

Suppose a farm to be possessed and occupied by a family of seventy persons. Let thirty of these be engaged in providing food and the other necessities and conveniences of life; twenty in keeping watch, preserving order, instructing the young, &c. and of the remaining twenty, let some be occupied in employments of no real use or necessity, and some in lounging about the grounds, making expensive, unprofitable visits to the neighbouring farms, or residing there altogether, and, of course, entirely at the charge of the labouring portion of the family to which they belong. To this society, let us suppose that ten persons are added by procreation or by adoption, and that they take an efficient part with the thirty labourers; under such circumstances, if the farm be sufficiently capacious, and its produce can be proportionately increased, will not the additional labour be highly beneficial to the whole family? But should the ten individuals be added to the idle and uselessly employed persons, is it not equally certain that the shares of the whole must be proportionately reduced?

That each productive labourer, who performs as much work as he did before, must give up for their use a larger share of its produce and retain a smaller share for himself?

It is true, that a considerable portion of Mr. Malthus's work consists of common-place truisms and just, but inapplicable, reflections. Nevertheless, his having jumbled together truth and falsehood, whether undesignedly or otherwise, has been productive of much evil. The wicked oppressors of their fellow-men, and the profligate idlers, who have quartered themselves upon the labouring community, have eagerly laid hold of those statements and arguments of the *Essay*, the tendency of which is to excuse and defend their wickedness, and to remove its deserved reprobation from themselves to their oppressed victims. This interested party has been joined by prejudiced men and by many honest and credulous persons, who have taken Mr. M.'s assertions on trust; and they form an imposing band which, with matchless impudence and folly, has supported measures calculated to repress, or,

perhaps, we should rather say, to diminish the numbers of those by whose labour it obtains subsistence.

The extraordinary marriage-act, together with certain propositions and discussions of a similar nature and tendency, first drew my attention to this subject, but, until very lately, I had not an opportunity of perusing attentively the "Essay on the Principle of Population."

By its first hasty perusal I became impressed with the belief that its main principles are erroneous, and its general tendency highly pernicious. I, therefore, re-examined it, and, as I proceeded, made remarks in writing.

Thus originated the following pages, which I present to my fellow-countrymen, as containing, I hope, premises from which they may draw correct conclusions on these most interesting topics of discussion.

Much of the "Essay on the Principle of Population" consists of discussions on various



branches of political economy. It is indeed improper, and even impracticable, completely to separate the subject of population from that of national finance. A treatise written professedly on the subject of the steam-engine cannot surely be deemed complete, if it contain no notice of the powers and effects of that machine; nor, if it treat merely of those powers and effects, without explaining its construction. Neither can a treatise on population be deemed complete, if it do not include the consideration of those laws which govern the production and distribution of the means of subsisting population; nor, if written expressly on that branch of political economy, without reference to the nature and laws of population. These considerations have determined me to lay a firm basis for my arguments and opinions, by prefixing to the examination of Mr. Malthus's Essay on these subjects an abridged statement of the main principles of political economy, as demonstrated by Mr. Ricardo, in his great work, entitled "Principles of Political Economy and Taxation," which work is, I believe, generally acknowledged to be more correct

than any other which has appeared on these subjects, and I have endeavoured to exclude the Malthusian errors with which Mr. R.'s pages are slightly tinged. On some few points my opinions differ from those of Mr. Ricardo, and I have exhibited my reasons for that difference. Whether these reasons are satisfactory or otherwise, my readers will judge for themselves. I refer those, who may doubt the correctness of Mr. Ricardo's general principles, or of my mode of stating them, to his own masterly performance, where they will find the most clear and convincing arguments given at full length.

I think common fairness towards Mr. Godwin renders it incumbent on me to warn such of my readers as may not have perused that author's "Enquiry concerning Political Justice," that it is to the representation given of his doctrines by Mr. Malthus that I refer, and not as actually contained in his work. This caution I think peculiarly requisite, because I cannot help suspecting the correctness and candour of that representation.

It will appear that I make no pretensions to fine writing. I only submit a statement of facts and opinions, and shall, therefore, be happy to find that hostile critics are reduced to attack the clumsy and unfashionable vehicle instead of the arguments which it contains.



# REMARKS

ON

**"THE ADDRESS TO THE LANDHOLDERS,"**

**BY SIR JAMES GRAHAM, BART.**

**OF NETHERBY.**

---

SINCE the following pages were printed, two works of considerable importance on Political Economy have issued from the press. These are Mr. Jacob's "Report on Foreign Corn and Agriculture," and an "Address to the Landholders," by Sir James Graham. The former of these is an exposé of momentous facts, with which, and with all their important bearings, every Briton, at this crisis, ought to make himself acquainted. The latter is a production which, in the present state of the country, must attract unusual attention, because it appears to divulge and to advocate those opinions which, in all probability, will be adopted and acted upon by the landholders.

I have attentively perused Sir James Graham's

book, and I now present the thoughts excited by that perusal, as an appropriate application and illustration of the opinions contained in the succeeding work.

I would recommend my fellow-countrymen not to call into question *the desire* of the present executive government to advance the public weal, by every practicable mode that can be pointed out. Past errors are, indeed, admitted with reluctance; measures of precaution, especially if they be of a decisive character, are seldom adopted against dangers which are not apparently immediate. Moreover, the course of legislation which the executive power adopts, is too often, not that which is selected by adequate information, and confirmed by the deliberative sagacity of a disinterested senate. It is rather that which is forced upon it by the self-interestedness of a particular portion of the public, which, by various violations of the British constitution, has usurped the legislative power of the country.

Sir James Graham has declared, and the declaration is well sustained by facts, that the landholders have possessed themselves of political power, and that there are no limits to the exertion of that power, except the public opinion. As we are well aware of this, and of the way in which that power has been uniformly exerted, it becomes evident that public

opinion must not only be boldly expressed, but that it must likewise be expressed in conformity with loyalty to the crown, and fidelity to the constitution, before it can oppose an adequate resistance to the destructive influence in operation against it.

The avaricious ignorance of the legislative landholders, is especially exhibited in their attempts to prohibit the manufacturing and commercial population from freely exchanging the produce of their labour for that of which neighbouring nations have to dispose. On that produce the landholders have not a shadow of claim, and adequate expressions are wanting to designate such unjust and tyrannical policy. It may, however, be observed that the policy they support is not less foolish to themselves than pernicious to others; and nothing can more strikingly exemplify the old fable of the boy and his goose which laid golden eggs. On the numbers and wealth of the population in any country the amount of its land-revenue essentially depends, and would the holders of the British soil but open their eyes while dissipating its revenue in foreign lands, they could not fail to discern, that a scanty and scattered population invariably occasions cheapness of corn and lowness of rents. What, then, but ignorance the most gross, united with avarice the most grasping,



can have led the landholders to do all which in them lies to arrest the progress of the country in population and wealth, by taxing the corn of the country, and by prohibiting its free importation from abroad ?

The nobility in the House of Lords, and their sons, brothers, and nominees, with the baronets and esquires of the House of Commons, "form a phalanx which no minister can resist," however great his abilities, however upright and beneficial his designs, if he be not supported by the hearts and hands of an enlightened and unanimous public. His Majesty has placed able and well-intentioned men in the administration of his government, and the hour is now arrived when Britons should come forward as one man, and enable them to do their duty to all classes of the community. Now let us teach the "immense majority and irresistible phalanx" that the times are different from those in which the curfew-bell of their tyrannous ancestors tolled the knell of English liberty, and sent the horrid sounds, on the wings of every evening breeze, over the hills and vales of Albion.

It may be objected that, although the landholder's corn-tax is supremely mischievous, and quite incapable of vindication, yet, that they are not chargeable with the other branches of the enormous amount of taxation which is

now ruining the country ; because the expensive wars, and other ruinous measures, which produced that taxation, were as much, if not more, to be attributed to the money-jobbing crew who have been mingled among them in the legislature. But this objection falls to the ground by their own admission ; for they allow that they possessed the power to prevent it ; and why did they not exert their power ? Were they negligent or ignorant,\* or were they accomplices in the work ?

It is, doubtless, the wish, as it is the duty, of the sovereign of the United Kingdoms to balance, impartially, the interests of all his people : he will not voluntarily sacrifice, or sanction the sacrifice of the many to the few ; and, consequently, a complete and open declaration of sentiment from all portions of the community is what he must desire, as enabling him to determine on, and direct, efficiently, his efforts for the good of the majority.

The king of an aristocracy is not a king in any good sense of the word ; he is merely an

\* Some of them have had the candour, or, it may be, impudence, to get up in Parliament and declare, that they are ignorant of political economy ; that is, ignorant of the management of the national interests, which they came there, forsooth, to direct and superintend!!! Sir James Graham had good reason for prefacing his statements on the currency-question by an acknowledgement that country gentlemen cared for none of those things. He is right.

engine of oppression in the hands of that order: the power of such a king, instead of being fixed on the national dome, may be considered as suspended on the top branches of a banyan-tree, which has overshadowed that dome, and which, unless speedily removed, will, by shooting its roots into the joints of the building, cause it ultimately to burst in ruins. As the banyan-tree is productive neither of fruit nor timber, but merely of a bad material for fuel, it is an appropriate emblem of an aristocracy, or governing landed interest. The name acquired by an Earl of Warwick is recorded on the page of history, and the catastrophe of Poland is a lesson to which all kings and all people should pay particular attention.

His Majesty and his able and patriotic administration know well, that it is to the increase of the British wealth and population, by means of cultivation, manufactures, and commerce, that they must henceforth look for the means of preserving and increasing the national power and prosperity. The destruction of the feudal tyranny formerly exercised over France, and the general modification of the system throughout the continent,\* conjunctively with the late

\* Vide Mr. Jacob's Report, for an account of the wisdom and boldness of the Prussian government in this respect.

stupendous manifestation of power which Britain, supported by manufactures and commerce, displayed, have powerfully enabled and induced France, and the continental states in general, to exert their utmost efforts to raise these sources of power within themselves; the consequence must be that their superior geographical dimensions, if combined with only an equal security of moveable property, and a greater facility of supporting labour, will enable them not only to equal but to surpass Britain, if she do not keep the start she yet has, in improved means of production: this she can only do by allowing a free disposal of the produce of labour, and by removing, as much as possible, that taxation which now impoverishes and renders abortive the exertions of the labourer.

What, then, may the executive government be expected to think of the virulent opposition lately made, to its benevolent purpose of liberating for sale, and granting permission to import, a few days' food for the people of the country, in their present miserable situation! especially if it be considered that they consented to burden that small quantity with a tax of 25 per cent. in order to protect the landholders in the enjoyment of *their* tax.

" It is impossible to believe, in these  
" latter days, when thrones have fallen and

" kings have trembled, that the striking difference" between the support afforded by an industrious and free population and that of an idle and profligate aristocracy, led like a herd of buffaloes, chained through the noses, by an unprincipled crew of jobbers, should not be duly estimated by a wise sovereign. The lay and clerical aristocracy of France, brought on the revolution in that country, by their execrable refusal to bear their share of the expenses requisite for the support of the government. They may, therefore, in strictness, be charged with the murder of the king and royal family—the destruction of the established religion—and the diffusion of that revolutionary spirit which enabled Napoleon to lay Europe under contribution, and to pull down and set up its kings at his pleasure. Nor can it be forgotten that, no sooner did they perceive the approach of that storm which by their profligacy had long been gathering, than, like what they were, a band of guilty poltroons, they took to flight—left their misguided king to the ruthless fury of a distracted mob—and employed themselves in stirring up the surrounding despots to fall on their native country, and to re-bind about her neck the horrid fetters of feudalism, from which she had freed herself. The due considerations of these striking events cannot fail, henceforth, to dispose wise monarchs to place themselves,

as the greatest of their predecessors have uniformly done, at the head of their whole people, rather than at the head of only a small portion.

The *heart* of public opinion is in the middle rank of life—in that as yet numerous portion of the community which, removed alike from the evils of incessant drudgery, vicious idleness, or profligate ambition, enjoys the advantages always attendant on a state of alternate leisure and useful activity. It possesses intelligence sufficient for the formation of a sound judgement, which is neither unduly biassed by interest nor obscured by passion: it is composed of the cultivating, the manufacturing, and the commercial classes: its natural head is the king, and its arms his ministers.

Opinion, emanating from a body thus constituted, cannot be outraged with impunity, as it is the only check to aristocratical tyranny and misgovernment. But to render this check effectual, it should be wisely directed with a co-operating spirit, not to demand any present measures inconsistent with the general future advantage.

“ I do not,” says Sir James Graham, “ pretend to have made any new discoveries, I wish only to recal to your recollection the facts and arguments brought forward, at various times, by higher authorities,” and so to

bring the object before you in a correct point of view. And I do so, because "much error" has arisen from your attention having been "diverted to different and detached portions of" the subject."

Since the year 1815, when the landholders first substituted the exclusion of foreign grown corn, except at a famine price, for their previous system of levying a tax from the people by means of bounties on exportation, and high duties on importation, "their constant" and avowed object," says Sir James Graham, "has been to raise the price of agricultural produce in this country greatly above the level of the continental markets. The obvious effects of this" (*detestable*) "policy have been" (*to shut up or narrow the foreign markets for our manufactures*) "to raise the rate of wages, and to reduce the rate of profits." By a rise of wages so caused, the labourer, instead of gaining, loses; because, when corn is dear, all the articles of first necessity are also dear. If the exchangeable value of income be reduced, the reduction must fall on its component parts—profits and wages; and when the latter can sustain no further reduction, the whole then falls on profits. By the diminution of profits, every class of productive industry is deeply injured, for, on all hands, it is allowed that profits fall

with every fall of the exchangeable value of the gross produce of the employed capital. Rents, however, as Mr. Ricardo has demonstrated, are raised in real value, by every artificial as well as natural rise of prices; every artificial rise of rent, is a direct uncompensated tax on all the other classes of the community, highly injurious to all its productive classes, and solely beneficial to the landholders for the time being.

It is true, that even, for the time being, the existing system of prohibition is not so entire a benefit to the landholders as they imagine; for, in the variety of seasons which occurs in the climate of Europe, it is impossible that the land cultivated in these islands can every year produce a supply of corn adequate to the demand. At one time the prohibitory system is hurtful to the farmer, at another, to the consumer. To the farmer it is injurious, because, having made his calculations on the high price which the landholder had promised to maintain for him by legislative enactments, he is ruined by a deficient crop, the value of that crop being reduced by sudden importation. The landholder must, eventually, experience ruin, by a total, or, at least, a partial loss of rent. The consumer is, however, the greatest sufferer. He is pinched while the price is rising to the famine price, at which importa-



tion is limited, and he is not only pinched, but he is absolutely exposed to the horrors of famine itself; for, in proportion as the demand for foreign grain is small and unusual, the supply, in case of emergency, must be insignificant and precarious. Thus the alternate evils of redundancy and scarcity, unsteady prices, and uncertain, though high rents, are the inevitable consequences of the present equally absurd and wicked system of corn laws. These laws proceed on the ridiculously ignorant assumption that foreigners will always raise and keep on hand a surplus of corn for the supply of a casual deficiency of the crops in England, when they can by no means foresee the year when such deficiency shall happen.\* Even admitting for a moment that such assumption is well founded, it is clear that cash alone can then be received by those foreigners in payment. The market for manufactures must be gradually created, and must be regular in its operations. It is impossible, by its very nature, that it would be separated into septennial or triennial periods, even could they be made of regular occurrence.†

The landholder's best customer is the manufacturer; but his prosperity depends entirely

\* Demand must be made, or must be known that it will be made before the supply will (or can) be provided.

† See Jacob's Report on Foreign Corn and Agriculture.

on the rate of profits which it is the avowed tendency of high corn prices to reduce. If corn be dearer in England than elsewhere, (it cannot be too often repeated,) wages must be higher, and if wages be higher, profits must be lower, the real exchangeable value of gross produce remaining the same. Thus our foreign competitors obtain the greatest possible advantage; and if the system become permanent, manufacturing employment, except for the home-market, must cease in this country, and its foreign commerce and shipping be transferred to its rivals. Surely, then, no class can be permanently benefitted by that artificial enhancement of the price of provisions, which must secure to the foreigner successful competition, and obstruct the principal channels of native industry.

The public ought, therefore, to direct their combined and unrelenting hostility against the landholder's corn-tax, under any shape whatever. "The receivers of rent are a very small body," says Sir James Graham; "backed by public opinion, they are almost omnipotent. In violation of public opinion," (*as they are now proceeding,*) "they cannot long retain an exclusive advantage. The contest is to them fearful, for on what will its decision depend? On the very topic which inflames to madness. That hunger which breaks

“ through stone walls will” (*and ought to*) “ be arrayed against them, reason may soon be heard no longer \*\*\*\* and estates, distinctions, honours be swept away” (*from the present race of landholders*) “ by the resistless torrent.”

I think we should deny, in the most unqualified manner, the claims of the landholders to any tax whatever. They may call it, or rather *miscall* it a protecting tax, or a remunerating tax, or what else they please, but that difference of name makes no difference of nature; let us, however, look a little at these claims exhibited by their present knight-errant.

If any tax peculiarly affect the cultivators it should be removed. I make no such observation respecting the landholders, for they have taken especial care not to lay any such tax on themselves. Mr. Ricardo says, and says truly, that a tax affecting the cultivators exclusively is, in effect, a bounty on the importation of corn from abroad. But what taxes affect the cultivator exclusively? On this question in particular there is no trusting to the statements of the landholders,\* and, there-

\* If we compare the proportion which the taxes paid by the landholders in England bears to the rate of rents and the amount of the whole taxes raised in this country, with the proportion which the taxes paid by the continental landholders bears to the rate of rents, and the amount of the

fore, we shall examine those assigned by Sir James Graham in their order. And,

I. **TITHES.**—These are, under restricted importation, (as we have elsewhere shown,) paid by the public; but they ought to be paid by the land, and, therefore, not only have the landholders no claim on the public, but the latter have a claim upon the former for the value of the whole tithes paid, both to the clergy and the lay impropiators, since the date of the first corn-laws, or during about 150 years. So much at present for this demand.

II. **POOR-RATES.**—On this subject I beg to say that the present nominal amount of these will be greatly reduced when the portion of wages, which, by abusing and perverting the poor-laws, is kept back from the labourers, and afterwards paid to them as poor-rates, is deducted. But it is not only in this delusive way that the poor-rates are swelled in amount; there are other charges of considerable magnitude, which are carried to that account with no very good view, but without any reason whatever, as may be seen more fully in the following work. The corn-tax is, after all, the great cause of the present heavy rate for the poor. This is acknowledged, we may say de-  
whole taxes raised in their respective countries, we shall find still less reason to trust our landholder's statements in this subject.

monstrated, at full length, in a celebrated journal, which, although too generally stultified by its whiggish attachment to Malthusianism, yet occasionally proclaims some truths of no small importance with respect to the affair before us. It observes that "The perfect freedom of the corn-trade would secure us perpetual plenty." This would, of course, obviate the necessity of poor-rates. Again, "If trade declines by the restrictions on it, the common people *must* either come upon the parish or fly to our foreign neighbours. If the landholders will not consent to a system of freedom, let them not deceive themselves by supposing that the pressure of the poor-rates will ever be effectually diminished. If they will have monopoly they must take all its consequences along with it. The granting a free trade in common, paying an import-tax of ten per cent. ad valorem would relieve the landlords of the greater part of the poor-rates."\*

The Edinburgh Reviewer pursues the subject at considerable length, but, as in the Appendix to my work, I have extracted from, and commented upon the article, I shall be excused from saying more on it in this place.

### III. THE COUNTY and HIGHWAY RATES.—

\* Edinburgh Review, No. 81.

These are commonly exhibited in conjunction with the sums expended for the relief of the poor. It is, however, admitted that these county and highway rates increase with the increase of the population and wealth of the country, and the increase of highway-rate can hardly be complained of; indeed, the very mention of it indicates the impudent and unfounded nature of all claims urged by the landholders. For new bridges, new or improved roads, or other modes of communication, are as advantageous, if not more so, to the farmer, and, through him, to the landholder, as to any other class of persons. While we are on this subject it appears proper to mention, that when the roads began to be improved and extended from the metropolis into the country, "*The owners and occupiers of land*" in the neighbourhood had the modesty to petition Government to prohibit the extension of turnpike-roads beyond some few miles (thirty I believe) round London, lest the produce of the more distant parts of the country should be brought into the city market so cheaply as to compete with that raised in its neighbourhood!!! This precious manifestation of the principles of the class\* should always be borne

\* There could be no tyrants if there were no willing slaves. The occupiers of land, by their willing slavery

in mind, not only by the citizens of London, but by those of every city and town in the United Kingdom.

“ The weight of the administration of justice is fixed on the land,” says Sir James Graham. We would ask him to allow an impartial and competent person to estimate the quantum of that weight, after deducting what is caused by game-laws, perversions of poor-laws, and excise taxation-laws, all of which, particularly the first two, are the landholders’ *own laws*, and are, consequently, a weight of justice (or rather injustice) brought on by themselves.

“ It is the boast and the pride of the landholders that the most important establishments of our policy (the support of the Church and the Poor) have been founded on their estates as on a rock, from which they cannot be moved.” With this assertion of Sir James Graham, I shall couple his following concession, viz. that “ the clergy and the landholders, the poor and the proprietors, are coparceners in the soil,” and then I ask whether it may not be perfectly correct to say that the claims of the landholders to the rent which they take are

to the landholders, have enabled these to become the tyrants of the country.

founded upon the estates of the church and the poor? Indeed, if we put aside the paramount right of the state, the latter motion seems to be the more correct of the two. The tenth of the gross produce of the land was appropriated to the support of the clergy, the church-buildings, and the poor, long anterior to the date of any tenure by which the present race of landholders claim the rent of the soil.

The landholders have usurped a large portion of the tithe-tax, under the title of lay-impropriators. They have thrown the expense of building churches upon the public treasury, and that of repairing them and supporting the poor upon the people at large, and they are perpetually consulting how they may, with safety to themselves, fully enslave the poor by means of the very laws intended for their relief; and how they may, if the enslaving do not succeed, abolish these laws altogether. Yet the worthy champion of the landed interest tells us that the payment of tithes and poor-rates is their boast and their pride!

Another statement of a similar character to the above, viz.—that “they (the church, and the poor, and the landholders,) must stand or fall together, on their existing tenure,” requires some little notice; for the payment of tithes does not fix the church on a rock from



which she cannot be moved. It has placed her on a mount of sand, which the floods of improvement and the winds of inquiry are undermining on every side. The payment of tithes was originally instituted in the ages of simplicity, when regular rent and taxation in money were alike unknown, and the produce of the soil was divided in kind among the different claimants. Its continuance in the original form, amidst the completely altered circumstances of the present time, is as impolitic towards the safety of the church as any measure which can be easily imagined. The levying of tithes brings the minister of Christianity into collision with his parishioners, on a subject entirely at variance with the spirit and precepts of that glorious religion. It fills his mind with the cares and speculations of commerce, and renders the amount of his salary directly dependent on the winds and weather; the consequences of such a mode of providing for the clergy are fully discernible in Ireland, and, surely, every disinterested man who examines the subject in all its bearings must feel the propriety and necessity of raising his voice to demand that tithes, which are at once "the most burthensome, most intolerable,\* most

\* A great outcry is at present raised against the taxes levied for the use of the state, but little or nothing is said

“ pernicious, and, except the landholders’  
 “ corn-tax, the most inequitable of all taxes,  
 “ be forthwith abolished, and that a specific  
 “ proportion of rent, equal to the utmost value  
 “ now received by the clergy, be substituted  
 “ instead.” By this substitution, the value of  
 that proportion will of course increase in future

about the intolerable tithe-tax. This neglect is, however, merely attributable to ignorance of the amount of that tax, the mode of its working, and the effects produced by it. Were that ignorance dispelled from among our public writers, we should hear the public voice lifted up for its immediate abolition. “ A cheaper government is our only  
 “ remedy. The expense of our naval, military, and official  
 “ establishments must be reduced one half,” say the ignorant. In reply, I desire of them to disprove the assertion I now make, viz.—that the people employed and paid in those departments either have been, or now are, of incomparably more service and necessity to the nation than the idle hordes of landholders and lay-impropriators. The tithe-tax, with an annual swoop, transfers one whole tenth of the *gross* produce of our agriculture, yea even from our fisheries also, from the support of labour to the support of idleness and hypocrisy, or to defray the charge to which rent is liable for the support of the clergy. Let the tithe and corn taxes, then, be first repealed, and even then let us pause before we resolve on laying up the navy to rot; on dismissing the sailors, soldiers, and the civil servants of the public; or on empowering the idle, useless, and profligate landholders to defraud their creditors.

The tithe and corn taxes take directly and indirectly a greater sum out of the pockets of the people than is equivalent to the whole interest of the national debt.

with every increase of the wealth and population of the country. The clergy will thus be interested more than now in that increase; and the church will *then* be securely founded on the soil of the country.

As to the rights of the poor to the soil, these rights cannot stand or fall *together* with those of the landholders. The rights of the disabled and needy can never be confounded with those of the idle and the profligate.

We now come to the currency subject, and on it have to observe that the influential landholders and fund-jobbers, after having depreciated the currency, by concurring in making Bank of England notes a legal tender, in order to carry on the late war, and after having neglected (purposely, it would appear) to establish any limit or check upon the issue of those notes, have, ever since the peace, been endeavouring to cause the people to purchase a metallic currency sufficiently great to pay the rents, tithes, and other taxes, at the nominal rate of the depreciated paper currency, and to carry on the vastly extended business of the circulating medium. All the gold coin in the world is, probably, inadequate to supply such a currency, and, therefore, the thing may be considered, in its full extent, impossible. The reiterated attempts to bring about such a state of things have co-operated with the tithe and

corn taxes to inflict unprecedented distress on the working classes. And all these measures, and their consequences to producers, manufacturers, and commercialists, are attributable to the ignorant avarice of the landholders,\* and the villany of their friends the jobbers.

That the alternate depreciation and elevation of the currency, with all the disastrous effects thereby produced, is attributable principally to the powerful landholders can hardly be disputed; but let us recur to their apparent motives and conduct. Anxious for their rights and privileges, as they insolently denominate their usurpations upon the community, they encouraged or enabled an ambitious minister to provoke a war with revolutionary France, and they presented cart-loads of addresses, containing the most solemn assurances of determinations to support that war with their lives and fortunes. The war has terminated, and their lives are safe; but their fortunes—ay, there's the rub. Their fortunes have been ruined? Oh, no! greatly increased by the expenditure of borrowed capital, and by the

\* Contrast the conduct of these gentlemen with that of the Prussian Government; which charged a tax on the land for the support of the widows and children of those who had fallen in the service of their country; and observe on it that the Prussian Government is not dictated to by an avaricious, unprincipled band of landholders and jobbers.

increase of manufacturing population and wealth. Yet now that it is necessary for them to give up that increase, to defray the charges of the war, charges which they have bound themselves to pay, they turn round upon the Government, and, cursing it to its face, call upon it to continue their corn-tax, and plunder their creditors, *alias* the fund-holders. Such conduct ought to put the British public, particularly that portion having their property in the national funds, on their guard against being deluded to act the parts of suicidal accomplices in designs so opposed to their own honour and interests.

Sir James Graham asserts that the money borrowed on the guarantee of the landholders, to carry on the war, &c. was raised at the rate of about fifteen shillings metallic currency per pound sterling, and that now they are required to repay it at the rate of twenty such shillings per pound sterling; this statement is not correct. The interest only is required to be paid, and that is not higher at present than in proportion to a capital of fifteen shillings metallic money per pound sterling: and if there be a surplus of taxes wherewith a portion of that funded debt has been bought up by sinking-fund commissioners, at a higher rate, it must appear that, as such taxes have been contributed by the public at large, a proportion of

such surplus has been furnished from taxes paid by the fundholders themselves, since they form a part of the public.

Although the refusal of the landholders and their party to give up any moiety of the revenue arising from the soil, or fixed property, compelled the ministers to impose, in 1819, three millions of new taxes on labour; and although that year was rendered still more memorable by a renewed attempt to obtain a metallic currency at the expense of the people, and stands among the most wretched in the annals of our misfortunes; yet its effects would soon be remedied if the British public would more generally apply themselves to the investigation of their interests and would act unanimously in the support of measures adequate to the preservation of those interests.

That the ministers were deceived in their estimate of the effects which have been caused by the attempts to force the people to repurchase a metallic currency, concurrent with the present amount of tithe, corn, and state taxation on labour, may be admitted, without derogating from their abilities or intentions; at least as compared with those who now assume the office of their accusers. The ministers were merely mistaken as to those effects; but the landholders and fundholders were, per-

haps, equally mistaken, and were, at all events, outrageously selfish. These two parties were bent on transmuting the interest of stock and the high paper-money-rents into gold; and, could they have accomplished their design, the public might have been distressed to the utmost extremity, without their caring a straw about the matter. It was only when they began to find that they could neither accomplish their objects nor escape some small share of the distress consequent on the attempt, that they began to cry out against the ministers for making it.

It is curious to observe a landholder uttering his tirades against Mr. Huskisson's vacillation and inconsistencies, as if these were not forced upon him and his colleagues by the profligate selfishness of their opponents. Sir James Graham's sneer at Lord Liverpool, for adapting his conduct to circumstances, is, in truth, a panegyric on that distinguished and excellent nobleman:—  
“ A wise man considereth, and changeth his purpose; but a fool is obstinate in his folly, he passeth on and is punished.” We are all the pupils of circumstances; no one can, therefore, reasonably predict of any questionable subject that, when placed in a different point of view, he shall see no difference in its bearings, or in the peculiar way of its determination. Wicked men who will not obey, and

foolish men who cannot discern, the dictates of reason, will alone form unalterable determinations.

Unfortunately, every minister is now compelled either to resign his place, or to act in conformity to the dictates of the "immense majority and irresistible phalanx;" dictates which spring from selfish feelings, and which can seldom be otherwise than adverse to the public weal. For my own part I hesitate not to express my wish, that the time were come when a minister of the crown could "contemplate with complacency," not, perhaps, the destruction, but the wholesome chastisement of a class, who have been principals or accessaries in causing and aggravating all the political evils, with which we are now afflicted. In truth, it is not the influence of the crown, but the influence of an oligarchy which "has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished."

Sir James Graham implores the landholders to abandon their ultimately futile, but immediately pernicious efforts to keep up the price of corn, and advises them to "make a timely compromise with the public, and take an ample but fair protecting duty," (alias *corn-tax*) "with open ports, for the admission of foreign corn;" and he goes on to tell us that, "on the same principle, a *drawback* on ex-



“portation may be obtained.” Softly, softly, Sir James; a word with you before we proceed further. Pray what is the nature of this claim which we are to compromise with your brethren, and whence has it arisen? We wait for your answer to this question; and, in order to assist you in making it out correctly, I beg leave to furnish you with the heads of a claim or claims which the public have upon the landholders. Some of its vouchers, I trust, you will recognize in the following extracts from Doctor Adam Smith’s “Wealth of Nations.”

“The trades, it is to be observed, which are  
“carried on by means of bounties, are the  
“only ones which can be carried on between  
“two nations for any considerable time together, in such a manner, that one of them  
“shall regularly lose or sell its goods for less  
“than it really costs to send them to the  
“market.”

But, “In the case of corn, a bounty on its  
“exportation is the smallest part of the expense which it really costs to the society.  
“In years of plenty, it has already been observed that the bounty, by occasioning an  
“extraordinary exportation, necessarily keeps  
“up the price of corn in the home-market  
“above what it would naturally fall to. To  
“do so, was the avowed purpose of the institution. In years of scarcity, although the

“ bounty is frequently suspended, yet the  
“ great exportation which it occasions in years  
“ of plenty, must frequently hinder more or  
“ less the plenty of one year from relieving  
“ the scarcity of another. Both in years of  
“ plenty and in years of scarcity, therefore,  
“ the bounty necessarily tends to raise the  
“ money price (and in this case the real price  
“ also) of corn somewhat higher than it would  
“ otherwise be in the home-market. The corn-  
“ bounty, it is to be observed, as well as every  
“ other bounty upon exportation, imposes *two*  
“ *different taxes upon the people*; first, the tax  
“ which they are obliged to contribute to pay  
“ the bounty, and, secondly, the tax which  
“ arises from the advanced price of the com-  
“ modity in the home-market, and which, as  
“ the whole body of the people are purchasers  
“ of corn, must, in this particular instance, be  
“ paid by the whole body of the people. In  
“ this particular commodity, therefore, this se-  
“ cond tax is by much the heaviest of the two.  
“ Let us suppose that, taking one year with  
“ another, the bounty of five shillings upon the  
“ exportation of the quarter of wheat raised  
“ the price of that commodity only sixpence  
“ the bushel, or four shillings the quarter,  
“ higher than it otherwise would have been  
“ in the actual state of the crop. Even upon  
“ this very moderate supposition, the great

“ body of the people over and above contri-  
 “ buting the tax which pays the bounty of five  
 “ shillings, must pay another of four shillings  
 “ upon every quarter which they themselves  
 “ consume. But according to the very well  
 “ informed author of the tracts upon the corn  
 “ trade, the average proportion of the corn ex-  
 “ ported to that consumed at home is not  
 “ more than one to thirty one. For every five  
 “ shillings, therefore, which they contribute to  
 “ the payment of the first tax, they must con-  
 “ tribute six pounds four shillings to the pay-  
 “ ment of the second,” for the benefit of the  
 landholders.

“ The bounty upon the corn exported has  
 “ sometimes cost the public in one year more  
 “ than three hundred thousand pounds!”

In the 22d of Charles II the landholders  
 first began their career of systematically fleecing  
 the people by law. In that year they made  
 the first of those laws, and by it prohibited  
 the importation of wheat, unless when it rose to  
 the price of “ times of very great scarcity. The  
 “ importation of other sorts of grain was also  
 “ restrained by rates and duties (taxes,) equally  
 “ high and subsequent laws still further in-  
 “ creased these duties,”—taxes on corn!

“ These restraints upon importation, though  
 “ prior to the establishment of the bounty, were  
 “ dictated by the same spirit—by the same

“principles which afterwards enacted that regulation,”—say imposition.

“By the 1st of William and Mary,\* the bounty was established,” and it may be said to have continued in effective operation down to 1791.

Now should we take no notice of the period between the 22d Charles II. and the 1st William and Mary, and only take the round number of one hundred years, or from 1689 to 1789, during which the landholders were levying the bounty-tax from the people, and should we leave out of our view the effects produced on prices by their prohibitions and restrictions *since* 1789, and only take, as the basis of our calculation, *one-third* of the sum paid *in one year* as bounty-tax through the Exchequer, and as direct landholder's tax through the farmers, we shall obtain data for calculating the amount of

\* The Whigs seem to have lost no time in turning the Revolution to account in the way of filling their pockets out of those of the people. They also, be it always remembered, began the national debt, and set up that pretty engine, the Bank of England, to assist in the work of plunder by means of decreasing the currency. Great advantages have, doubtless, been derived from the Revolution; small, very small, however, in comparison of those which would have been obtained if *the people* instead of a *foreign aided faction* had managed it themselves.

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our claims upon the landholders on account of the bounty-taxes.

Tithes, according to Sir James Graham's admission, ought to be paid out of the rent of the country, that is, they ought to be paid by the landholders; but when corn is artificially raised by means of any prohibitions or restrictions on importation, higher than it would be in a state of perfect freedom, they are paid in part or in whole by the people.\* Now, suppose we take only twenty-five years of the period between 1789 and 1826, and the amount of lay and clerical tithes, at the very low estimates of five millions sterling, per annum, we shall obtain the next item of our claims against the party, and the whole will stand thus:—

*Landholders, Dr.*

*To the Public, or the other  
part of the Community.*

To amount of bounty-tax paid for the benefit of foreigners, to enable them to eat our corn cheap, at £100,000 per annum, for 100 years .....	£10,000,000
Amount of enhanced price caused by the bounty- tax in the home market, at £3,100,000 per annum, for 100 years.....	£310,000,000

\* See the chapters on these subjects in the following work.

Amount of tithes paid by the public during  
twenty-five years of the prohibitive or re-  
strictive system at five millions per annum £125,000,000

Total amount paid by the people ..... £445,000,000

of which, exclusive of interest, the sum pocketed by the landholders has not been less, but doubtless much more than £435,000,000. Four hundred and thirty-five millions of pounds sterling !!!

There Sir James Graham is an intelligible and a just claim, which I do myself the honour of presenting on the part of the public to you and your brother landholders for serious consideration and speedy *compromise*, if not liquidation. When this is arranged, the farmers may, if they choose, present *their* claims upon the landholders for the money screwed out of their pockets by the working of the currency during the last ten or twelve years, a claim which will amount to a sum probably not much short of thirty to forty millions sterling. Meanwhile we are all anxious to ascertain the nature and amount of the demands which you have against us, and which you talk of compromising, and, therefore, the sooner you favour us with these and the necessary vouchers the better.

I shall here bestow a few words on a protest which was recently made by some noble

lords. Although this instrument is, no doubt, regularly recorded, like all others of the same kind, yet I am wishful that it should enjoy a peculiar distinction. I would engrave it on a pillar of brass, because, in the qualities of knowledge and modesty it is quite unrivalled, By it we are informed that a tax to the amount of 20 per cent. on our corn for the benefit of the landed interest is hardly half enough, and, in support of the assertion, we are referred to the protecting duty on some manufactures, particularly silk. The placing of taxation on foreign silk, and on home-grown, or even imported corn on the same footing, is a precious manifestation of the notable qualities above mentioned.

I possess not time to comment on this document as it deserves, and therefore I shall leave it for the present, after offering up a prayer to that most gifted individual of the protestors, who is known in several characters, and, among the rest, as an author on subjects of Political Economy.\* I supplicate him to point out to us wherein Mr. Ricardo was wrong in his demonstrations of the fact that a bounty or protecting tax on corn is highly beneficial to the landholders, but, on the contrary, a bounty or

\* Vide Mr. Ricardo's Remarks on a work entitled, "An Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Public Wealth."

protecting tax on manufactures is not beneficial to the manufacturers, but rather the reverse, because they must bear their share of the loss caused to the public interest by the misdirection of so much of its capital.

Returning to Sir James Graham, we have to notice his insinuation about “a *drawback* being obtained,” and to request the public to be on their guard against the usual deceptive trick of mis-naming their laws, which the landholders have long been in the habit of practising. Some scheme or other is doubtless now on the carpet among them, of which the drawback or bounty is intended to form a portion.

Sir James Graham, it seems, arranges the landholders among the productive classes. He might as well arrange the fundholders and sinecurists among them also. If every soul of the landholders were shipped off to Patagonia to-morrow, we should have quite as good a crop next year, as we shall have if they remain, and follow their usual occupations.\* If

\* “ It is sufficiently obvious, that the share of the rent of  
“ land, which may be taken to defray the expenses of the  
“ Government, does not affect the industry of the country.  
“ The cultivation of the land depends upon the capitalist,  
“ who devotes himself to that occupation when it affords  
“ him the ordinary profits of capital. To him it is a matter  
“ of perfect indifference whether he pays the surplus (of  
“ the produce of the soil) under the name of rent to an in-



we had to depend on them for supplying us with food and raiment, we should soon require the administration of the sacrament of extreme unction.

I trust that the craft which has long, too long, ranged landholders and cultivators in one class is in danger. The public are now beginning to perceive that the landowners, so far from being considered as working bees, or even as drones, must be viewed as little, if at all, better than mischievous wasps.

"But then," cries Sir James Graham, "they merely want an equivalent for the burdens imposed on the producers of corn, to which the consumers of corn are not equally liable." Well; who imposed those burdens? Were the "immense majority and irresistible phalanx" driven out of town to hunt rabbits and shoot tame pigeons when those burdens were made up and clapped on the backs of the farmers? But, however that may have been, we have discovered other and better modes of taking off their weight than that of taxing every grain

"dividual proprietor, or under that of revenue to a government collector."—*Vide Mills's Elements of Political Economy.*

No wonder, indeed, that the landholders and their party affect to undervalue the knowledge of political economy. Its truths are not their friends, nor the friends of their measures.

of corn eaten, or otherwise consumed, in the country.

Sir James Graham next proceeds to tell his brethren that the payment of a permanent tax to them by the people of 25 per cent. on every loaf of bread and pint of beer used by the latter, is a "*concession* which will win back the " kindly feelings of the (said) people, rivet the " gratitude of the community to the cause of " the land-owners," (*owners* mind,) " and enable them to exert all their power," &c. &c. &c. After noticing a few more of Sir James Graham's paragraphs, we shall take into consideration the objects, to obtain which the united powers of the landholders and the people are to be directed, so soon as the last rivet of our gratitude has been securely clinched.\*

" The paramount duty of every government " is attention to the interests of the community, " of which the labourers must" (or, at least, ought to) " form the great majority. The right " of property itself is instituted for the good, " not of the few who possess wealth and titles, " but of the many, who have them not. If the

\* The effects of the present enormous taxation on labour, as recapitulated by Sir James Graham, must, we suppose, be esteemed by the working classes as furnishing additional motives for " kindly feelings" towards the " immense majority and irresistible phalanx" by whom it has been imposed!!!

“majority be deeply injured, the public peace is in danger; if the majority want food, private property becomes a nuisance.” Bravo! Sir James, this is speaking up like a man! stick to this principle, and we may yet be friends. “The proper function of government is to secure to every man the free exercise of his own industry,” (and, of course, enjoyment of its fruits,) “unimpeded by the violence either of his fellow-subjects or of foreigners,” said, lately, the “New Times and Representative;” so you see that on this subject we are all agreed.

Sir James Graham’s statement of the disastrous effects caused by *working* the currency of France under Louis XIV. is irrelevant to his object, because there is a want of necessary parallelism in the premises. The depreciation in France was caused by the mandates of a despot. That in England has been caused by the malicious hatred of popular liberty,—the short-sighted avarice, supineness, and ignorance, of that very class of the community, who are now clamouring most loudly about its disastrous effects. If “the *ancient* aristocracy” of these realms must ultimately be sacrificed “to creditors and annuitants,” their knight-errant may console himself with the reflection that such sacrifice will be a consequence of their own actions, or of measures to which they

assented, and that, therefore, it will be in consonance to the dictates of justice.

Sir James Graham "protests that the number of proprietors, with estates unincumbered; forms so small a minority, as to make a contrary description for all practical purposes a designation of the whole body." Suppose the fact to be so. What then? How have these incumbrances been brought upon them? Why, by the gambling-tables of France, Italy, and St. James's—by the Turf and the Fives' Courts—by fox and hare hunting—by drunkenness, gluttony, and debauchery of every description—by castle, *abbey*, (forsooth!) hall, and house building, and by electioneering. This last, like every other part of the constitution, subjected to their controul, has been so grossly abused, that every friend to his country would much rather have the House of Commons nominated by his Majesty's ministers than by the present mode. Elections, under the influence of the landholders, have been changed into instruments not only for plundering the people, but also for widely disseminating their *own* vices, their prodigality, drunkenness, gluttony, bribery, and perjury. Observe the following specimen, extracted from the John Bull newspaper. "At the contest for Yorkshire, which lay between Lords Milton and Lascelles, the expense of each candidate was

“ not less than a £120,000. Every carriage  
“ and post-horse throughout the country was  
“ put in requisition. Every inn and *tavern*  
“ was open, and the whole was one scene of  
“ lavish expense, ruinous to any fortunes but  
“ those of the two families which were equal  
“ to the enormous pressure. The last North-  
“ umberland election is said to have cost each  
“ candidate £3000 a day, and the sitting  
“ member purchased his return, for a few short  
“ months, at an outlay of £50,000.”

These are some of the causes of the embarrassments of estates, and among the whole it will be found extremely difficult to discover even one which can correctly demand compensating relief from the public.

Although the “ *ancient* landholders should  
“ be ruined” by the fair operation of their own  
measures, it is not true that “ the farmers and  
“ labourers must stand or fall with them.” The  
farmers, whom their currency tricks and corn-  
tax bills have entrapped into taking long leases  
at a high rent, might indeed sink, but, ultimately,  
neither will the farms want tenants nor  
the labourers want employment. Taxation of  
labour may, as it has already done in most  
places, “ reduce the labourer to eke out exist-  
“ ence by potatoes ;” but, most assuredly, the  
transfer of the land from the debtor to the  
creditor—from the country cub to the en-

lightened citizen—would not produce any such disastrous effects.

With regard to *antiquity* of possession, all I can say on it is that the longer the lands have been held by one set of families the more reasonable it appears that another set should have their turn, or rather that that which belongs to all (and should, therefore, only be held by the state for the general benefit) should no longer be monopolized by a part; and, as to antiquity of pedigree, I believe that the Jews have, according to the laws of primogeniture, a preferable claim to any privileges attached thereto, because they are descended from Noah's eldest son. Had the Patriarch entailed his estate, there could have been no other legitimate aristocracy than that branch of Shem's posterity, who alone have preserved the records of their genealogy.

The conduct of the landholders has been truly detestable at all times. Let us look at them during the period of their glory, when they were engaged, at the instigation of Mammon's priests and votaries, in tallyhoing the dogs of war upon the French people, when they were throwing many farms, and even whole parishes, into the hands of dashing neck-or-nothing speculators, and thus reducing the bold peasantry of England to the condition of enslaved day-labourers, or driving them to take

shelter in the cellars and garrets of the manufacturing towns—those very towns which these landholders now blockade by means of their corn-taxation-laws. Let us behold them converting the originally-beneficent poor-laws of England into machines of plunder, of degradation, and of tyranny. Let us descend to particulars, and, in the example of one, illustrate the transactions of the generality. An English landholder—an *ancient Pistol*, too—threw a county of Scotland into sheep-farms, burned the cottages over the heads of the natives, and drove away the latter, at the point of the bayonet, from scenes endeared to them by innumerable heartfelt associations—from Britain, the land of their fathers, to people the wilds of America, and to strengthen her giant-republic. Here is a subject on which landholders should employ painters to decorate their halls. “Honour,” indeed! yes, there is honour among rogues of every grade, but it is not *true* honour!

The remaining positions taken up by Sir James Graham are fully exploded in the following work; and, therefore, I shall now proceed to examine the objects sought to be attained by the landholders, and which Sir James Graham tells them they shall obtain, if they *rivet* the gratitude of the people by fixing a tax of 25 per cent. on bread, and by an imposition

of about 30 per cent. on some other subjects, as, for instance, on the jointures of their widowed mothers, on the slender portions of their orphan brothers and sisters, whose misfortune (crime they, doubtless, consider it) was to have been born after themselves—on the annuities which they have granted for money advanced to them, and employed in keeping up their engagements at the gaming-table, on the turf, and in the ring, or in defraying the expenses of corrupting the parliamentary electors. The funded income, too, purchased from government (under the guarantee of the landholders in Parliament assembled) with the earnings of industry and the donations of benevolence, for the support of age, widowhood, orphanage, sickness, education, and religion ; the income of the defenders of the country ; the support of hospitals, of infirmaries, and of other public charities ; of religious and benefit societies ; of public institutions, colleges, and schools ; of saving-banks, &c. &c. all must submit to the *trifling inconvenience* of the reduction before mentioned. Oh, most modest, most honourable, and most disinterested landholders!!! So, the 435 millions sterling which you have already squeezed from the public in the course of the last 150 years, are to be considered merely in the light of a claim, on your parts, for some hundred millions more!!



Such are the objects which the landholders are endeavouring to accomplish, and which they expect to bring about by the aid of the public, whom they hope to delude by cajolery and false representations. But, shall those expectations be fulfilled? And will every payer of taxes throughout the kingdom—will the peasant, the artizan, the manufacturer, and the merchant—assist and enable them to defraud their creditors, and to destroy the national character?

Let my fellow-coutrymen never lose sight of the fact, that dear bread, especially when in connexion with enormous taxation, is a heavy check upon industry: they should feel assured that every notion of a general freedom of trade is futile, unless preceded by a really free and untaxed trade in corn.

A much less complicated and much more just law than many of those which the landed interest and jobbers have imposed on us in the course of the last 140 years may be passed to protect the cultivators of poor soils from the pressure of burdens too heavy for them to bear.

Let all such burdens (whether tithes or any other dues payable by the occupiers of land) be changed into a tax on rent (alias revenue of public property) to a similar amount, and let it be equitably and regularly taken from the

rent, on the same principle as the tithes are now taken from the produce. A law proceeding on this ground would, at once, secure the church and relieve the cultivators of poor soils. It would, moreover, allow the improvement of the country to be carried on in conjunction with a free trade in corn, because the formidable and pernicious obstacle to the advancement of cultivation, occasioned by the indiscriminate operation of the tithe-laws, would be removed. The clergy, so far from receiving injury by such an alteration, would have an interest even greater than that which they now have in that improvement, since, with every extension of cultivation upon the inferior soils, rent is increased on all the superior lands, and the proportion assigned to the church is increased also.

It is time that the impolitic and pernicious system, which was partly continued and partly established by the tyrant Henry VIII. and his minions, should be reformed by the liberal George IV. and his present enlightened administration. It is time that the ministers of Christianity should be relieved from the necessity or risk of quarrelling with the English householders and farmers, or of tithing the Irish cotter's potatoes at the point of the bayonet. Every well-wisher to the church must join in a measure so well calculated to realize its se-

curity, comfort, and respectability, and every clergyman must rejoice at the prospect of being emancipated from the dire necessity of staining his cloth, and affording so much occasion of complaint and opposition to the enemies of the established religion, on account of the mode in which the clergy at present obtain the means of subsistence.

I have now stated the objects to which I think the most serious attention should be given at the present time. I am convinced that my readers will perceive their importance; and, if they will honour the following work with a considerate perusal, I cannot but hope that the opinions I have maintained will obtain from them a preference over those which have been exhibited by Sir James Graham.

## INTRODUCTION.

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POLITICAL Economy is the name given to the science which teaches the proper management of national affairs, and has the same meaning as applied to those of a nation, with the term Domestic Economy as applied to those of a family; and for practical as well as theoretical purposes, it will be found a correct mode, when investigating the subject, to consider an independent family as being an exact type of a nation, and a nation as a member of the great family of nations; in corroboration of which assertion, we could, if it were needful, easily demonstrate, that whatever line of conduct, whether internal or external, would be permanently beneficial or prejudicial to a family, would in like manner be beneficial or prejudicial to a nation.

Labour is the sole original treasure of mankind; and the produce of the earth, all

that is derived from its surface, its mines, and its waters, by the application of human labour and skill, primarily belongs to the labourers or proprietors of the labour employed in its production ; but that labour being generally of two kinds, viz. immediate labour and the produce of former labour, two classes of labourers are thereby formed, who are respectively termed labourers and capitalists. Further, it is necessary, for the effective operation of labour, that a class of persons should be appointed by every society to devise, conduct, and execute the necessary operations required for the general and particular government and defence of the community ; and thus three classes, viz. labourers, capitalists, and governors, (with their civil and military employés, and instruments of defence and protection,) are formed, among whom the whole produce derived as above mentioned is divided, under the names of wages, profit, and revenue.

In different stages of society, the proportion of the produce of the earth, which will in the first instance be receivable by each of these classes, will vary accordingly, depending principally on the fertility of the soil,

accumulation of capital and population, and on the ingenuity and excellence of the instruments employed in the agricultural, mining, fishing, manufacturing, and commercial operations of the society.

To discover and expound the laws which do (or should) regulate this production and distribution, is the principal object sought to be attained by the science of political economy ; and without the knowledge of which it is impossible to understand the effects produced by any given measures of governments on the state of society, or on profits and wages, by the progress of wealth and population, or to trace satisfactorily the influence of taxation on different classes of the community, particularly when taxes are laid on productions more immediately derived from the earth. Some of the most celebrated writers on these subjects, having taken an incorrect view of that most important portion of public wealth, usually denominated rent, have, in consequence, overlooked many great truths, which can only be discovered after that is thoroughly understood.

The distinctive properties of value and riches, stated in the following pages, are

also of great importance to be thoroughly understood, as also the effects caused by the introduction and improvement of machinery on the interests of the different classes composing the state. The ability of a country to contribute additional money taxes, although the total money value of its aggregate commodities should fall in consequence either of less labour being required to produce its corn at home by improvements in its husbandry, or from obtaining a part of the corn wanted at a cheaper price from abroad, by means of the exportation of its manufactured commodities, will likewise be stated, together with other important consequences, deducible therefrom; and some considerations will be suggested regarding the question of allowing the unrestricted importation of foreign corn, in a country whose capital and labour is burdened with an excessively heavy amount of fixed money taxation, in consequence of an immense government debt.

# ABSTRACT PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### ON VALUE.

THE term value has two different meanings; one expressing the inherent usefulness of the thing spoken of, and the other the power of acquiring other commodities which its possession confers on the holder thereof; the one may be termed value in use; the other, value in exchange. Things having great value in use, may have little or none in exchange, and, contrariwise, things having great value in exchange may have little or none in use; water and air are abundantly useful, and also indispensable to our existence, yet, ordinarily, they are of no value in exchange; old rags are of little value in use, yet when made into paper-money become of great value in exchange. Therefore, abstract utility, or power of gratifying any desire, is not the measure of exchangeable value, although it is an absolutely necessary ingredient in it.



If any commodity be in no way useful, or cannot in any way contribute to our gratification, it is destitute of exchangeable value, however scarce it may be, or however great a quantity of labour may be necessary to procure it. Possessing utility, commodities derive their exchangeable value from three sources : their scarcity, and the quantity of labour, and the degree of danger, requirer and incurred for their attainment ;—the two last are, however, regulated by one and the same law, and therefore what may be affirmed of the one, may also be so of the other. Some commodities have their exchangeable value determined by their scarcity alone ; their value therefore varies only with the varying wealth and inclinations of those who are desirous to possess them : no labour being adequate to increase their quantity, their value cannot be lowered by an increased supply. Rare statues and pictures ; scarce ancient books and coins ; wines of a peculiar quality, produced on a particular soil of very limited extent ; are of those which come under the above description.

These commodities, however, compose but a very small part of the mass daily exchanged in the national market ; so small, indeed, as to form a mere exception to the general rule, and which exception therefore, although proper to be mentioned in this place, need not be further

noticed. Commodities in general may be multiplied not only in one country, but in many, if we are disposed to bestow the labour and incur the danger necessary to accomplish their production and multiplication.

Therefore, in speaking henceforward of commodities, of their exchangeable value, and of the laws which regulate their relative prices, it will be understood that we mean always such commodities as can be increased in quantity by the exertion of human industry, and on the production of which competition operates without restraint ; and that when we speak of labour generally, we mean pure labour and the danger attending its exertion ; for any reduction, in the danger or disagreeableness attendant on any employment, will have precisely the same effect as though a corresponding reduction had taken place in the amount of labour previously required therein ; and, contrariwise, any increase of danger, &c. attendant on the exertion of labour, will enhance the value of commodities in the same manner as an increase of pure labour itself would have done.

In the earliest stages of society the exchangeable value of commodities, or the rule which determines how much of one should be given in exchange for a certain quantity of another, depends almost entirely on the comparative

quantity of collective labour, expended on each.\*

These considerations being premised, it follows, that, with the exceptions just stated, the real price of any thing is the labour invested or expended in its production. What any thing is worth to the man who has acquired it, and who wants to exchange it for something else, is the labour which it cost him to procure it; and that, for which he wishes to exchange it, is the labour which the acquisition of the thing desired in the way of exchange can save to himself or others for his gratification. Labour is therefore the first, the original purchase-money paid for all things. In that early stage of society which precedes both the accumulation of capital, and the creation of national revenue (*alias* rent), the proportion between the quantities of labour necessary, and the danger attending on the peculiar mode of its exertion for acquiring different objects, is the only rule afforded for determining their exchangeable value. If it required twice the collective labour and danger to catch a salmon, that was required to catch a cod, one salmon would naturally exchange for, or be worth, two cod.

\* By collective labour, we mean labour, risk, and capital combined, the latter being in all cases originally produced by the former.

Those principles are really the foundation of the exchangeable value of all things, and a doctrine of the utmost importance in political economy, because of the erroneous and vague ideas frequently attached to the term value.

Therefore it is clear, that every increase of the quantity of labour, or of risk, attending its exertion, must augment the value of that commodity in which it is invested, and every diminution must lower it.

In the progress of society, the exchangeable value of all commodities will be subject to fluctuation in value, as all other things are, by the proportion between the supply and demand, and also by the varying price of the food, and other necessities, on which the wages of labour are expended, whether caused by taxation, or by prohibitions of importation, whereby an increasing population must be supported by the cultivation of inferior lands, which require additional labour to produce an equal quantity of food, or raw produce. Gold, silver, and all other commodities produced by labour, must therefore vary with the variations, in the quantity of labour invested in their production, and the estimated danger and inconveniences attending its investiture.

Gold and silver are nevertheless the least variable commodities yet known; being also small in bulk, they are easily transported from place

to place, and therefore form the best practical standard of value which can be adopted, other than that of a paper currency conducted on *perfect* principles.

Food and necessaries may rise an 100 per cent. if estimated by the quantity of labour necessary to their production, whilst they will scarcely have increased in value, if measured by the quantity of labour for which they will exchange. The same remark may be made respecting two or more countries. In America or Poland, &c. on the land last taken into cultivation, a year's labour of any given number of men will produce much more corn than on land similarly circumstanced in England. Because, in those countries much fertile land remains uncultivated, which is not the case in England, (generally speaking); but if all other necessaries be not equally cheap in those three countries, it is evidently a mistake to conclude that the quantity of corn awarded to the labourer, will in each country be in proportion to the facility of production.

If any part of the necessaries requisite to the comfortable existence of the labourer could, by means of improved machinery, extended markets, or any other cause, be furnished at, say, one-fourth of the cost now required for their production, the labourer would not (even though he could do so) consume four times as much of

those necessities as he did before, because the demand for population, in consequence of the increased profits and consequent accumulation of capital, would soon cause a supply of labourers in a proportionate degree, and their consequent competition with each other would again reduce their means of existence to the natural standard. If these improvements were extended to all the articles of the labourers' consumption, the ultimate effect would be the same.\*

If, therefore, a given quantity of labour can sometimes purchase or produce a greater and sometimes a lesser quantity of commodities, it is incorrect to say, that it is their value which varies, and not that of the labour which purchases them; but it is correct to say, that the collective quantity and condition† of the labour necessary for acquiring different commodities, affords the only rule whereby to estimate their value relative to each other.

\* It should not be forgotten that an increase of population, occasioned by any of the above causes, is a natural accession to the strength of the state, and therefore such improvements, &c. are public benefits; and, farther, it is certain that the increase in the power of enjoying comforts and conveniences previously beyond the reach of the labourers, would give them a taste for those things, which would be permanent; and if oppression did not force them to forego these comforts, &c. their condition would be permanently improved.

† By condition, we mean the degree of risk and inconvenience attending the investment of pure labour or of capital.

If a variation happens in the relative value of (say) two commodities, we can easily find out in which of those it has happened, by comparing the present value of each of them with that of most other commodities; when, if we find that one will exchange for the same quantity of those other commodities as before, and also find that the other commodity has varied with respect to other commodities, in general we may infer that the variation has been in it, and not in those with which we have compared it. If we further find that the same quantity and condition of labour is necessary to the production of those other commodities as before; but that the same quantity and condition is not necessary to produce the single commodity, whose relative value is altered; we are then sure, that the variation has been in the single commodity, and we also discover the cause of its variation.

The value of a commodity, or the quantity of any other commodity for which it will exchange, depends therefore on the relative quantity of labour and danger which is necessary for its production or acquisition, and not on the greater or less amount of the species of compensation which is paid for that labour.

The relative proportion of wages and profits in the different employments of labour and capital, is not much affected by the riches or poverty,—the advancing, stationary, or declining

state of the society. Such revolutions in public welfare, though affecting the general rates or total amount of both wages and profits, cannot produce any permanent disproportion in their relative rates.

Although labour of different kinds be differently rewarded, that is no permanent cause of variation in the relative value of commodities.

In the most simple state of society, when hunting or fishing were the chief occupations of the people, some capital in the form of the necessary implements for catching their prey would be necessary, and the relative value of the different species of captured animals would therefore be regulated by the total amount of the risk, time, and labour, undergone and expended in catching them, and in preparing the implements and machinery necessary for effecting their capture. The comparative durability of the different sorts of implements, &c. would also operate on the value of the acquired commodity, in the same manner as if more or less labour had been originally expended on their construction.

Whether the requisite capital afore-mentioned was produced by the labour of the hunter or fisherman himself, or by another class of persons, it would make no difference in the relative value of the animals captured thereby; which would still be determined by the total



amount of labour expended in the formation of the capital, the amount of labour invested and danger incurred in the catching of the animals.

If the Society extend its operations and divide its labour, by employing some in providing improved implements for hunting, fishing, &c., and others in preparing the rude machinery first used in agriculture, and attending to the preservation of the produce and the seed, &c. still the exchangeable value of the commodities produced thereby, would be in proportion to the aggregate labour bestowed on their immediate production, and on all the implements or machines used in it. If the society make still greater improvements, and attain to a flourishing state of arts and commerce, commodities will still vary in exchangeable value, conformably to the fore-stated principle.

Economy in the use of labour, or in the time necessary for its performance, as also any diminution of danger accompanying its exertion, will, in proportion to the labor\* or time so saved, or degree of danger so obviated, reduce the relative value of the commodity wherein the saving has taken place, and the effect will be the same, whether the saving be made in the immediate or remote labour, or, in other words, in the labour or capital employed. It would, in the

\* Time must in this sense be generally considered as equivalent to the labour which might be performed during its lapse.

first case, reduce the exchangeable value of the commodity by the full amount of such saving ; in the other, the reduction would fall partly on the commodity produced thereby, and partly on those other commodities, to the production of which the liberated capital was applied. Every increase in the expenditure and condition of the labour necessary to produce any one or more commodities, would of course produce exactly opposite effects on their exchangeable values.

If, in consequence of either game or fish becoming more scarce or more plentiful, the same quantity of labour obtained more of the one or less of the other than before, their exchangeable value would immediately vary by the difference in the labour expended on their acquirement.

In an advanced state of society, the machinery employed in different trades will generally be more or less durable, and require more or less labour for its construction : the proportion of the capital required for the support of immediate labour, and of previous labour, or that invested in machinery, &c. will also be variously combined in the productions of different trades. These variations of durability and application of capital will therefore occasion a corresponding variation in the relative value of commodities ; with every variation in the quantity of the different kinds of labour, (or of the value of that,) which is employed in their production.

Capital is said to be fixed, or durable, according to its different degrees of durability, and of the time necessary for its renewal or replacement.

In one trade a very little capital may be employed, in the immediate support of labour; but much may be invested as fixed capital, in machinery, implements, buildings, &c. In another trade, an equal amount of capital may be employed in the support of labour, and very little invested in machinery, &c. A rise in the value of labour will therefore unequally affect commodities, produced under such different circumstances.

Two natural causes alone can therefore operate to vary the relative value of commodities, viz. a change in the quantity and condition of labour previously expended on either of them, and a rise or fall in the value of immediate labour, and which would operate differently on them, according to the ratio which the fixed and circulating capital employed in their production bear to each other.

Capitalists may employ in production exactly the same quantity of immediate labour, or in other words circulating capital, and yet the commodities produced thereby will vary in value, according to the amount of fixed capital employed by each respectively.

The relative value of commodities will be affected by a rise in the wages, (or in other words,

value,) of immediate labour. The relative values of commodities produced by fixed labour will undergo no change thereby, nor those commodities produced by immediate labour; but the relative value of those produced by either species of labour, whether employed by itself, or differently combined, will be altered by every alteration in the value or condition of immediate labour.

There can be no real rise in the value of labour without a fall of profits.\*

If a rise took place in the value of immediate labour, the profits of circulating capital would fall in exact proportion, if there were no existing fixed capital employed in production: but by means of raising the price of its productions, a fair proportion is made to fall on the fixed capitalist, and thus a rise of wages, without a corresponding rise of all prices, affects all profits; and the greater the ratio which the fixed bears to the circulating capital of the country, the less will be the general fall of profits, in consequence of a rise in the value of immediate labour; but in exact proportion to the amount of each species of labour employed, their productions will

\* This is of course, like some other general principles of the science, unexceptionably true, only, in the case of a country having no connections with any other, or else having an unrestrained intercourse of trade and communication with all the other countries of the world.

rise or fall in relative value to every particular commodity as compared with another.

The variation in the exchangeable value of commodities, caused by a rise or fall in the value of labour, is trifling, in comparison with that resulting from an increase or diminution in the quantity and condition of labour expended on their production; while the first can hardly make an alteration of more than 6 or 7 per cent., the second may occasion a variation of 20, 30, or more per cent.

The causes which can operate to effect a natural alteration of the permanent rate of profits in any considerable degree, are only by possibility effective in the course of years, or rather ages; but alterations in the quantity of labour requisite to produce commodities are of daily occurrence. Every reduction of the danger previously connected with the exercise of labour; every improvement in machinery, in tools, in buildings, or in raising or procuring raw materials; saves labour, and reduces the exchangeable value of the commodities in proportion. For the sake of brevity and perspicuity in the subsequent part of this work, we shall therefore generally consider all the great variations which take place in the relative value of commodities to be caused by an alteration in the quality, quantity, or condition of labour requisite for their production from time to time.

It is true, that a third cause of variation in the exchangeable value of commodities, is, the greater or lesser time in which they can be brought to market; but it merely amounts to the same thing, as interest on the invested capital; and merely to mention it, for the purpose of shewing that we are aware of its nature and existence, is sufficient for the present.

The different proportions of fixed and circulating capital employed in different trades, as already observed, occasions a difference in the relative value of commodities produced thereby; with every alteration in the value of immediate labour, and in exact proportion to the quantity of each sort of labour employed; but such difference is merely owing to the different nature of the labour employed; therefore, the truth of the general principle, viz. that the exchangeable value of all commodities is neither more nor less than the whole value of the collective labour employed in their production, remains incontrovertible, and is of universal application.

The foregoing principles teach us that no commodity can form an invariable standard for estimating the value of all other commodities; but, as already observed, gold approaches to it the most nearly of any commodity yet known or proposed; because, it is probable that the quantities of fixed and circulating ca-

pital employed in its production are now and likely to continue nearly equal, and that it therefore forms a just mean between the two extremes, in which the different sorts of labour are invested in production; viz. the one wherein the least fixed capital, and the other in which the least circulating capital, is so invested.

And, therefore, although we know that gold, and consequently money made of it, is subject to variations in its intrinsic\* value, yet to assume it to be an invariable standard will facilitate the investigation of those principles which we have yet to state, and enable us to speak of the variations in the value of other things without embarrassing ourselves, on every occasion, with the consideration of the possible alteration in the intrinsic value of the medium in which price and value are estimated.

It will, however, be useful, previously to notice the different effects which will follow from the prices of commodities being altered by either of the causes formerly adverted to; namely, an alteration in the quantity and kinds of labour expended on their production, or a variation in the value of money itself.

The precious metals (when made into money) being the general medium of exchange

\* By the term intrinsic, we mean to express the quantity, quality, and condition, of labour invested therein.

between all civilized and commercial countries, and being distributed among them in proportions, changing with every improvement in commerce and manufactures, with every alteration of the policy and principles of governments, and with every fluctuation of population, is thereby subject to incessant variations; and, therefore, when stating the principles which regulate exchangeable value and price, we must not be understood to confound the variations in the intrinsic value of the commodity itself, with those occasioned by artificial variations in the medium by which value is estimated, or price expressed.

A rise in wages, owing to an alteration in the value of money, produces a general rise of nominal price, but has no permanent effect on profits; on the contrary, a rise of wages in consequence of either an increased demand for labour, or an increased general taxation, does not always produce a rise of price, but a fall of profits.\*

In the former case, no greater proportion of the annual labour of the country is devoted to the support of the labourers; in the latter, a greater portion may indeed be received by

\* It must be observed, that wages are in part composed of profits, and will sustain a diminution in the case of taxation, if the labouring classes are not previously reduced to a bare subsistence.



them; but if the difference be again extracted from them in the form of revenue, of some sort or other, for the support of the unproductive classes, as in this case it will be, they are not thereby benefited, but rather the contrary; since we well know, that a tax may be laid on with much greater facility than wages can be proportionally or, perhaps, possibly raised.

It is according to the proportions of the whole produce of the land of any particular farm, when divided into its three component parts of—revenue, profit, and wages, that we are to judge of a rise or fall in either of these divisions, and not according to the value at which any one or two parts of that produce may be estimated in a variable medium. Neither is it by the absolute quantity of produce appropriated to any one of these that we can correctly judge of the respective rate of each, but by the quantity of labour required to obtain that produce. By improvements in the machinery and agriculture of any given country or farm, the whole produce may be doubled; but if wages, rent, and profit, be also doubled, their relative values will bear the same proportion to each other as before, and may be said not to have varied.

An unequal increase of rent, wages, and profits, will alter the relative value of the one to the other, in exact proportion to the inequality

of such increase; those which had increased the least will be reduced in relative value to the others, although the owners of those different portions of the national wealth should be all really benefited by such rise, in a corresponding degree.

Variations in the value of money, generally speaking, will make no difference in the rates of profits; for it will not, when once prices of all kinds have been adapted to the new value, command more or less of the annual produce or labour of the country. It may, however, be observed, that the tendency of a reduction in the value of money, is to raise profits and lower wages; and a rise in the value of money has, of course, an opposite tendency.

If the produce of a given capital were doubled, and if it fell to half its former price, it would still bear the same proportion as before to the capital which produced it, and, consequently, profits would be unaltered in real amount.

By a doubling, or any other term of increase, in the money value of profits, capital is really increased in the same degree, and, consequently, the produce of a certain amount of capital is exactly the same as before.

If the produce of the country were increased or diminished in any assignable degree, re-

venue, wages, and profits, will only vary in relative value, as the proportions vary in which such produce may be divided among the three classes that share it.

## CHAPTER II.

### ON NATURAL AND MARKET PRICE, (OR VALUE.)

**ALTHOUGH** the quantity and quality of labour expended in the producing and bringing to market of any commodity be the natural value and price of that commodity, and the quantity and quality of that labour be the general rate which determines the relative value of all commodities; yet we must be aware, that temporary causes will sometimes effect a difference between their natural and market prices.

Such variations are generally occasioned by the fluctuations of demand and supply. With the rise or fall of price from those, or other causes, (independent of the cost of production), profits are partially elevated above, or depressed below their general level, and capital is thereby driven to or from the employment of producing that particular commodity in which the variation has taken place; and while capital is being withdrawn from one employment, and in-

vested in the other, the market price of the one commodity will be under, and of the other above its natural price, in consequence of the inequality in the supply and demand: but as soon as the necessary change in the employment of capital has taken place, market and natural price will coincide,\* and, all circumstances considered, profits are equalized in the estimation of the capitalist.

Capital is withdrawn from one employment, and invested in another, under ordinary circumstances; chiefly by the withdrawment of that capital, which, belonging to monied men, whether private individuals or bankers, and being lent by them to the active employers of capital, (who generally carry on their business to a greater extent than their own funds will allow), is returned by those manufacturers, &c., whose profits have fallen, and borrowed by those whose profits are either increased or stationary; rather than by the withdrawment and investment of the manufacturer's own capital.

Several circumstances connected with any particular employment of capital, such as cleanliness, ease, security, &c., may, and do occasion a different rate of profit on the same amount of

\* In saying that market and natural prices will coincide, we, of course, mean that they will do so if left to find their natural level, clear of all extraneous imposts, &c. which may be laid on particular commodities.

capital which in one trade may be 20, in another 25, and a third 30 per cent.; but on account of these collateral circumstances forming a counter-balance in the estimation of capitalists, those different proportions of profit when so adjusted will be permanent, unless disturbed by any accidental or artificial cause. A change of fashion, also, as, for example, in the substitution of silks for muslins, would elevate the profits of the silk manufacturer and the wages of his workmen; whilst those of the muslin manufacturer and his workmen would be reduced in a corresponding degree. Capital would immediately be withdrawn from the muslin manufactures, and invested in those of silk, until the profits of both were restored to the proportions they previously bore to each other; and those are the motives which, rendering every capitalist desirous to divert his funds from a less to a more profitable employment, prevent the market price of commodities from continuing for any length of time either much above, or below their natural price.

The atmosphere surrounds the earth at a medium height, by the powers of gravity; but that height is constantly fluctuating by the alternations of heat or cold, &c.; just so labour is the medium height of price, but that price is constantly fluctuating above and below the medium, by the effects of supply and demand, &c.

Having thus noticed the temporary effects which, in particular employments of capital, may be produced on the prices of commodities as well as on the *wages* of labour, and that the accidental profits of capital, effected by peculiar causes, do not influence the general price of commodities, wages, or profits; and since these effects are equally operative in all stages of society; we will leave them entirely out of our consideration, whilst we are stating the laws which regulate natural prices, natural wages, and natural profits. Therefore, in speaking henceforward of the exchangeable value of commodities, or the power of purchasing, possessed by any one commodity, we mean, always, that power which it would possess, if not disturbed by any temporary, artificial, or accidental causes, and which power we therefore term its natural price.

## CHAPTER III.

### ON THE DISTINCTIVE PROPERTIES OF VALUE AND RICHES.

A MAN is rich or poor, according to the degree in which he can afford to enjoy the necessities, conveniences, and amusements, of human life.

It follows, then, that value essentially differs from riches: for value depends not on abundance, but on the difficulty or facility of production: labour will always produce the same amount of value, but will not always produce the same amount of riches. By the invention of machinery, improvements in skill, a better division of labour, or the discovery of new markets, where more advantageous exchanges may be made, a million of men may produce double or treble the amount of riches than they previously did; but they will not, on that account, add any thing to value, which, as before stated, will be in proportion to the quantity of labour



employed on its production. By the introduction of the improved machinery, the value of the general mass of commodities will be diminished, for, although the value of the increased quantity produced, in consequence of the improvement, will be the same exactly as the value would have been, had no improvement taken place, yet the exchangeable value of the goods which were previously produced, and remain unconsumed, will be reduced, in as much as they must fall to the level, quantity for quality, of the goods produced, under all the advantages of the improvement; and the society will, notwithstanding the increased quantity of commodities, notwithstanding its augmented riches, and its augmented means of enjoyment, have a less amount of value. By constantly increasing the facility of production, we constantly diminish the value of some of the unconsumed commodities previously produced; though, by the same means, we not only add to the national riches, but also to the power of future production.

An increase or decrease of riches, and an increase or decrease of value, are not, therefore, synonymous terms; and it is only by attending to the true distinction between them, that we can avoid falling into mistakes in the statement of this subject. We have already observed, that no one commodity can constitute a standard of

value, since all are liable to fluctuation. That commodity alone can be invariable which, at all times, requires the same quantity and quality of labour to produce it.

We have also observed, that of such a commodity we have no knowledge; but if we had a correct standard of value, it, nevertheless, would not be a standard of riches. It is through confounding the ideas of value, that some have asserted, that by diminishing the quantity of commodities, that is to say, the necessities, conveniences, and enjoyments of human life, riches may be encreased: if value were the measure of riches, such assertions would be correct, for, by scarcity, the value of commodities would be raised: but if riches consist in necessities and enjoyments, then they cannot be increased by a diminution of quantity.

It is true, that the man in possession of a scarce commodity is richer, if, by means of it, he can command more of the necessities and enjoyments of human life; but as the general stock out of which each man's riches are drawn is diminished in quantity by all that any individual takes from it, other men's shares must necessarily be reduced in proportion as this favoured individual is able to appropriate a greater quantity to himself.

It may, therefore, be said of two countries possessing precisely the same quantity of the

necessaries and comforts of life, in proportion to the numerical amount of their population, that they are equally rich; but the value of their respective riches would depend on the comparative quantity and quality of the labour by which they are produced. We have stated the effect which an improvement in the manufacture of any particular commodity (whereby an increase of its produce, say double, were obtained by the same quantity of labour as before) would have on its value; and we may farther observe, that if such improvement were extended to the manufacture of every commodity, the absolute and relative value of those commodities would be exactly the same as before, but the wealth of the country will have been doubled thereby.

The riches or wealth of a country may be increased either by frugality of expenditure, and employing the income so saved in the maintenance of productive labour, or by making the same quantity of labour more productive: in the first case, both wealth and value will be increased; but, in the second, wealth only, and not value, will be acquired. Of these two modes, one or both will be adopted by every individual (except prodigals and idlers) according to the peculiar formation of their minds and habits; but in all national regulations, both modes, but particularly the latter, should be

encouraged as much as possible, since capital is that part of the wealth of a country which is, or may be, employed with a view to future production, and may be increased in the same manner as riches or wealth. An additional capital will therefore be equally efficacious in the production of future wealth, whether it be obtained from improvements in skill and machinery, or from using more income reproductively; for wealth always depends on the quantity of commodities produced, without any regard to the facility with which the instruments employed in production may have been procured.

Although great advantages result to all classes of consumers, from the abundance and real cheapness of commodities; yet we cannot estimate the value of a commodity by the abundance of other commodities, for which it will exchange. To measure any one thing, is to compare it with a determinate quantity of that same thing which we take for a standard of comparison for unity. To measure, then, to ascertain a length, a weight, a value, is to find how many times they contain inches, ounces, shillings,—in a word, unities of the same description. A shilling is not a measure of value for any thing, but for a quantity of the same metal of which shillings are made, and the thing to be measured can be referred to some other mea-

sure which is common to both. This they can be, for both are the result of labour, and, therefore, labour is a common measure by which their real as well as relative value may be estimated. It is certain, that our physical and moral faculties are alone our original riches, and the employment of those faculties, labour of some kind, is our only original treasure, and that it is only from its employment that all those things are produced which we call riches; those which are the most necessary, as well as those which are the most purely agreeable. It is certain, too, that all those things only represent the collective labour which has created them; and if they have a value, or even two distinct values, they can only derive it from that of the labour employed in their production.

The employment of machinery and natural agents, such as the sun, the air, the water, heat, &c. although they add greatly to *value in use*, never add exchangeable value; they may add very greatly to the riches of a country, but they add nothing to the value of those riches. As soon as, by the aid of machinery, or by the knowledge derived from natural philosophy, we employ natural agents to do the work which was before done by man, the exchangeable value of such work falls accordingly; and the nation is enriched by the amount of productions which the liberated labour may, and will, be

otherways employed in producing; the funds destined for its maintenance being in no degree impaired, except in so far as they be invested in the machinery necessary for employing those natural agents effectually.

Natural agents and machinery are, therefore, serviceable to us, in increasing the abundance of productions, by making men richer, and by adding to value in use; but as they perform their work gratuitously—as nothing is paid for the use of air, of heat, and of water—the assistance which they afford us adds nothing to value in exchange.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ON FOREIGN TRADE.

EVERY extension of foreign trade will contribute to increase the riches, and therefore the enjoyments, of a people, by increasing the quantity of commodities,\* but no addition will be made thereby to the amount of value in the country. As the value of all foreign goods is increased by the quantity of the produce of our labour, which is given in exchange for

\* The learned notion that an advantageous trade consisted in the great amount of the exports, and the small amount of the imports, is so completely foolish as to make it a matter of astonishment, to find that men possessed of common sense have asserted its truth, and acted thereon; as if either individuals or communities could be benefited by what they gave away, rather than by what they received: since, however, this consideration is, it may be presumed, sufficient to demonstrate the utter absurdity of such a notion, we shall not make any further comment on it, than merely to observe, that, when closely examined, the whole benefit of commerce will be found resolvable into the acquisition, not of more valuable commodities, but of more useful ones; not of more value, but of more riches; and all or any foreign commerce, if not mutually advantageous to all parties, will not be carried on.

them, we could not increase the value, although, by the discovery of new markets, we obtained double the quantity of foreign commodities in exchange for a given quantity of ours : neither the gains of the merchant, nor the value of the foreign goods, will be affected by the quantity of those goods.

The great profits sometimes made by particular merchants, in foreign trade, will not permanently elevate the general rate of prices and profits; but the profits of that particular trade will speedily subside to the general level, by the natural movement of capital, as already stated.

In the purchase of foreign commodities, either the same, a larger, or a less portion of the produce of the land and labour of the country, will be employed. If the same portion be employed, then will the same demand exist for those commodities as before ; and the same portion of capital will be devoted to their production. If, in consequence of the price of foreign commodities being cheaper, a less portion of the annual produce of the land and labour of the country is employed in the purchase of foreign commodities, more will remain for the purchase of other things. If more of the land and labour of the country be employed in the purchase of foreign commodities, less can be employed in the purchase of other things ; and, therefore, fewer hats, shoes, &c. of home



production will be required. At the same time that capital is liberated from the production of shoes, hats, &c. more will be employed in manufacturing those commodities, with which foreign commodities are purchased, and, consequently, in all cases, the demand for foreign and home commodities together is limited by the revenue, income,\* and capital of the country.

Capital, as already noticed, may be accumulated either by one, or both, or all of these methods; viz. either by increase of profit, expenditure remaining the same, or by reduction of expenditure, profit remaining the same—or by both conjoined. If, by the introduction of machinery, the commodities in the acquisition of which revenue or private income was chiefly expended, were to fall 20 per cent. in value, it would enable its possessor to save as effectually as if revenue or income had been raised 20 per cent. while enjoyment would not be curtailed as by the other mode. If, by the introduction of cheap foreign commodities, 20 per cent. can be saved on expenditure, the effect will be precisely the same as if machinery had lowered the expense of their production.

In consequence of the extension and discovery of markets, profits will be partially raised

\* By income, we mean the productions of capital and labour previous to its division into profits and wages, or those divisions united.

until sufficient capital has been accumulated to correspond with that extension, when they will subside to their former level, as already stated.

The extension of markets is efficacious in increasing the mass of commodities, and will thereby enable us to augment the funds destined for the maintenance of productive labour, and the acquisition of materials for its future employment. It is more important to the happiness of mankind that our enjoyments should be increased by the natural means of better distribution of labour and its productions, by each country employing its capital in the production of those commodities for which, by its situation, its climate, and its other natural or artificial advantages, it is adapted, and by exchanging them with each other, than that they should be augmented by any artificial rise in the rate of profits, even if the latter was permanently practicable, but which certainly could not be accomplished.

The rate of agricultural or manufacturing profits can never be naturally and permanently increased but by a real fall of wages, and there can be no such real and permanent fall of wages but in consequence of a real fall in the price of the necessaries on which wages are expended. If, therefore, by the extension of foreign trade, improvements in machinery, or reduction of

taxation, the food and necessities of the labourer can be brought to market at a reduced price, wages will fall, and profits will rise. If, instead of growing our own corn, or manufacturing the clothing and other necessities of the labourer, we discover a new market from which we can supply ourselves with these commodities at a cheaper price, wages will fall,\* and profits rise. But if the commodities so obtained, either by extension of foreign trade, or improved machinery, be exclusively those consumed by the rich, no alteration may take place in the rate of profit. The rate of wages may continue unaltered, although wine, velvet, silks, &c. &c. should fall 50 per cent. ; and therefore profits might likewise continue unaltered, except in so far, as the liberated revenue of the rich were applied to increase their demand for other commodities, which certainly would be the case, generally speaking.

Foreign trade, then, though highly beneficial to all countries, according to the degree of increase thereby produced in the amount and variety of the objects on which revenue may be expended, and affording, by the abundance and cheapness of commodities, an increase of enjoyment and of the power of saving and accumulating capital, has no tendency, permanently,

\* That is to say, wages will fall as it respects the capitalist, though the real reward of the labourer will be increased.

to raise the general profits of capital, unless the imported commodities be of that description on which the wages of labour are chiefly expended.

Under a system of perfectly free commerce, each country would naturally devote its capital and labour to such employments as are most beneficial to each. The correct pursuit of individual advantage is admirably connected with the universal good of the whole. By stimulating industry; by rewarding ingenuity, and by using most efficaciously the peculiar powers bestowed by nature, it distributes labour most effectually and most economically; while, by increasing the general mass of productions, it diffuses general benefit, and binds together, by one common tie of interest and intercourse, the universal community of nations throughout the civilized world. It is this principle which determines that wine shall be made in France and Portugal, that corn shall be grown in America and Poland, and that hardware, and other goods, shall be manufactured in Great Britain, &c. &c.

In one and the same country, profits are, generally speaking, always on the same level, or differ only as the employment of capital may be more or less secure and agreeable. It is not so between different countries. If the profits of capital employed in Yorkshire should exceed those of capital employed in London, capital would speedily move from London to

Yorkshire, and an equality of profits would be effected;\* but if, in consequence of the diminished rate of production,—from real capital in Great Britain, by the increase of taxation absorbing a large portion of its income, and the immense fictitious capital of the government debt always coming into competition therewith, profits fall, there are many natural and artificial impediments to the removal of capital, and the artizan-population, from England to France, or Holland, or Spain, or Russia, or America, where profits might be higher; but that they will move in certain degrees is now proved by experience.†

If Portugal and England were mutually to prohibit the present commerce in wine and cloth, and if there were no other market from whence they could supply themselves with those commodities, a part of the capitalists of Portugal would cease to produce wine, and

\* By considering those facts, we perceive the inutility and evil produced by continuing the chartered commercial and legislative privileges conferred on particular bodies of men, and on particular places, in a generally free country : during the ages of ignorance and feudal tyranny the conferring of those privileges was a wise measure, because conducive to general advantage at the time; but having served their days and generations they should now, for the same reason, be abolished.

† Under a system of free trade, and moderate or no taxation, such a state of things would not, however, occur.

would employ themselves in the production of cloth; when, in consequence of the natural and artificial deficiencies of the country, much more labour would be expended in its production than on that of the wine which they formerly exchanged for English cloth.\* If it were impossible, on account of any peculiar cause, to manufacture cloth, and it were to be obtained in another country, but at a dearer rate than in England, more Portuguese labour would likewise be expended for its attainment; the same result would be experienced by England from similar causes, and therefore their prohibition of commerce would be pernicious to both.

England may, advantageously, exchange the produce obtained by the labour of 100 Englishmen, for that obtained by the labour of 80 Portuguese, 60 Russians, or 120 East Indians; and it may be owing either to the natural advantages of those countries, or the inferiority or superiority in the amount of their respective skill, capital, and population, the disparity of which, in different countries, and not in different provinces of the same country, is easily accounted for; when, as already observed, we consider the difficulty with which capital and population moves from one country to another

\* It may be observed, that by the above means the value of the mass of commodities in Portugal would be increased, but the amount of her riches would be diminished.

in search of more profitable employment, and the ease with which they may pass from one province to another of the same country\* for the same purpose.

Gold and silver having been chosen by mutual consent for the general medium of circulation, or representative of the collective labour invested in different commodities, the operations of commerce causes their distribution among the different countries of the world, in exact proportion to the aforesaid labour-value of its commodities; and they therefore occasion no alteration in the natural traffic which would take place between those countries by direct barter, if no such metals existed; they merely facilitate the operations of commerce by enabling merchants to compare the value of labour invested in the production of any commodity in one country or province, with that of any other country or province; and to act accordingly, by exporting the commodities which are produced with less labour in the country from which, than in that to

\* A country possessing very considerable advantages in machinery and skill, and which may therefore be enabled to manufacture commodities with much less labour than her neighbours, may, in return for such commodities, advantageously import a portion of the corn required for her consumption, even if the lands were more fertile; and corn could be grown with less labour than in the country from which it was imported.

which, they are exported ; and by importing those which are produced with less labour in the country from whence, than in that into which, they are imported. The difference, therefore, constitutes the private gain of the merchants, the public gain of both countries, and supports the labour and machinery engaged in the transporting the commodities from the one place to the other, having exactly the same effect as though the merchants and their employés had themselves performed the manual labour necessary to produce the additional amount of commodities in each country, equivalent to that obtained by exchanging them against each other.

Commodities will only be exchanged, the one for the other, while there is a difference in the amount of labour invested in them, at least equal to the aggregate amount of that difference, and of the labour and time, &c. required to perform the operation of exchange. If, therefore, by any improvement in the manufacture of any commodity previously imported, so as to produce it at less cost than it can be imported for, the trade in that commodity will cease; and suppose it to have been the only commodity imported, or that the improvement had extended to all ; then, in lieu of those commodities, gold and silver will be taken, because an addition to their previous amount will be



necessary to circulate the increased productions at their former price. Gold then will be brought from the country which formerly exported commodities, until its labour-value in the one country be reduced equal to that in the other; that is to say, that an ounce of gold will exchange against an equal quantity of any one commodity in the one country, that it would do in the other, less by the cost of the labour of barter only. But the influx and efflux of money will affect commodities unequally; and therefore other commodities than that formerly exchanged between the two countries will afford a profit to both parties, and become objects of trade between the two countries.

If we suppose two countries equal in natural advantages, industry, and population; and that each country had exactly the same annual quantity and quality of every commodity, there would be no trade between these two countries; but suppose now that one of them, by conquest or other means, should impose the payment of a tribute on the other, or on a third country, the money-price of every commodity would rise in the imposing country, and the other would send a part of her commodities to acquire a share of the gold introduced by the tribute-money; prices would then rise in the first country, and fall in the second; but they would rise and fall unequally on ac-

count of the different kinds of labour employed in production. In all those commodities therefore which fall, thereby, so much cheaper in one country than the other, as to afford to the carrier a profit equal to the general rate of profits in the country, and also to defray the expenses of conveyance from the one to the other; trade in them would immediately commence, and very little material alteration of prices would thenceforth take place in either country, until some new facility or difficulty of production occurred in one or other of these two countries; when a new distribution of their commodities would take place, which would, as before, be effected by means of the precious metals. Taxation also disturbs the equilibrium of money, by depriving the country in which it is imposed of some of the advantages attending its skill, industry, or climate.

During the period when our paper currency was in a state of depreciation, the exchange was from 20 to 30 per cent. against this country; which accurately shewed the extent of depreciation occasioned in the currency of Great Britain and Ireland, by the excessive unchecked issue of paper money by the bank of England, to be chiefly expended unproductively; for it is clear that 120%. or 130%. could not be detained in England instead of 100%. unless it was depreciated; which it clearly

was, when of no more value estimated in the money of Hamburgh, Holland, &c. than the bullion in an 100%.

By sending 180% good English pounds sterling to Hamburgh, even at an expense of 5%, we should be possessed there of 125%; what then could make us consent to give 130% for a bill which would give us only 100% in Hamburgh, but that our pounds were not good pounds sterling? They were deteriorated, were degraded in intrinsic value below the pounds sterling of Hamburgh, and, if actually sent there at an expense of 5%, would sell only for 100%. With metallic pounds sterling it is not denied that our 130% would procure us 125% in Hamburgh: but with paper pounds sterling we only obtain 100%; and yet it was maintained by the collected wisdom of England, that 130% in paper was of equal value with 130% in gold; or, in other words, that a pound note and a shilling were of equal value with a guinea of gold—and a law was made to that effect!!! While gold is exclusively the standard in this country, money will be depreciated, when a pound sterling is not of equal value with 5dwts. 3grs. of standard gold; and that whether gold rises or falls in general value.

## CHAPTER V.

### ON COLONIAL TRADE.

WE have stated the advantages which every independent nation would derive from their governments mutually permitting them freely to exchange the produce of their industry with each other, when and where they pleased: and that by so doing, the best distribution of the labour of the world would be effected, and the greatest abundance of the necessaries and enjoyments of human life would be secured to all.\*

But the effects of those principles on which most nations, and England in particular, have regulated the trade of their colonies, by confining it to the mother countries, require a separate investigation; for this is, perhaps, the only case wherein the mean and malignant expedients of the mercantile monopoly-system do not clearly appear disadvantageous to both

\* It might likewise be easily shewn, that it would be equally for the general good, if every right and advantage of citizenship were mutually accorded equally to the casual and permanent inhabitants of every country.

parties. Of its injustice towards the colonies, and the consumers of the mother country, there can be but one opinion. It has however been said, that—If it would suit the interests of Holland and Jamaica to make an exchange of the commodities which they respectively produce without the intervention of England, it is quite clear, that by their being prevented from so doing, the interests of Holland and Jamaica would suffer, it is true: but if Jamaica is obliged to send her goods to England, and there exchange them for Dutch goods, an English capital or English agency will be employed in a trade in which it would not otherwise be engaged. It is allured thither (say they) by a bounty not paid by England, but by Holland and Jamaica.

That the above is a partial and limited view of the subject, and quite inadequate to solve the question, as to whether the colonial system be beneficial, or otherwise, would doubtless be made apparent if we had the means of taking a sufficiently comprehensive survey of its effects; we may, however, observe, from the present circumstances of the English West India colonies, that, by the above system, their white population has been vitiated and kept comparatively few, and therefore weak: the consequences of which have been, that, during war, England is necessitated to furnish a large military and naval

force for their protection; and even in peace also, on account of the detestable slave-system, the greatest part of the expenses of which protection must be placed against the bounty aforementioned. British soldiers and sailors have, moreover, been destroyed by thousands and tens of thousands from the effects of the climate, while their services were urgently required in other places. The slave trade has also been carried to a greater length than it could ever have been by the Islanders themselves; they durst not have imported so many slaves, nor have treated them so cruelly and shamefully, if they had not trusted to the British military and naval forces for their protection from the natural effects which such conduct would otherwise have produced.

Self-interest, that only real motive of affection or allegiance to government, has, in the case of the West India Colonists, been set in opposition to their connexion with England;\* and invasions, &c. of their islands, by the American Republicans, previous to the late relaxations of the Navigation Acts, in favour of the colonies,

\* Even the 4½ per cent. duty, levied on the Islanders for their internal defence, has been perverted from its due destination; the majority of those by whom it is received, are, however, thereby pointed out as belonging to the lowest class of the community in principle, however high the rank of their wealth may be.

would probably have been regarded by a majority of the inhabitants as the most advantageous event which could have happened to them, and to which their cordial co-operation would, therefore, doubtless have been afforded, although their ultimate massacre, and a repetition of the St. Domingo tragedy, would, without doubt, have been the consequences of such invasion, &c.

If we had the materials necessary for investigating this subject in complete detail, we have no doubt that the facts of the case would be found to bear us out in affirming, that the confinement of the colonial trade to the mother country has been prejudicial to both parties, although much more so to the colony than to the mother country.

Wanting these materials, we are, nevertheless, warranted by experience in asserting, that all monopolies occasion a prejudicial change in the direction of capital; and that even a monopoly of a foreign market by means of commercial treaties, should not be aimed at, except the country, for whose exclusive benefit such treaties were calculated, had, and could be sure always to have, the power of enforcing their everlasting observance without any corresponding expense.

Such treaties occasion a disadvantageous distribution of the general capital, which dis-

advantage falls chiefly, it is true, on the country bound by its treaty to buy in the least productive market: but it gives no advantage to the individual seller on account of any supposed monopoly, for he is prevented by the competition of his own countrymen from selling his goods above their natural price, that at which he would sell them, whether he exported them to France, Spain, or the West Indies, or sold them for home consumption. Moreover, the breach of the treaty or regulations, by war, revolutions, &c. would throw the capitalists, &c. engaged in the trade under it, into distress proportionate at least, if not greater in amount and duration, to any benefit previously derived from such treaties, &c.

A foreign trade, more or less extensive, according as it is more or less free and unburthened, will always continue (unless absolutely and effectually prohibited, which is not generally possible,) whatever may be the comparative difficulty of production: but it can only be artificially regulated (that is, deranged) by altering the natural price, not the natural value at which commodities can be produced in different countries: and that is effected by altering the distribution of the precious metals; and there is not a tax, a bounty, or a prohibition on the importation or exportation of commodities, which does not occasion a difference



in the distribution of the precious metals, an alteration every where in both the natural and market price of commodities, and a worse distribution of the general capital and industry, whereby less will be produced; the natural prices of commodities will be raised, and, though the consumers should be still able to purchase at the same amount of money value, they will obtain a less quantity of commodities. It will be seen, too, that if it even had the effect of raising profits, it would not therefore occasion a corresponding alteration in prices, these not being solely regulated either by wages or profits.

An increase in the cost of production of a commodity, if it be an article of the first necessity, will diminish its consumption in but a small degree: for, although the general power of the purchasers to consume be diminished by the rise of any one commodity, yet they may relinquish the consumption of some other commodity, not so absolutely necessary to their existence. In that case the quantity supplied, and the quantity demanded, may be the same as before; the costs of production only will have increased; and yet the price will rise, to place the profits of the producer of the enhanced commodity on a level with the profits derived from other trades or modes of employing capital.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ON SUDDEN CHANGES IN THE CHANNELS OF TRADE.

A GREAT manufacturing country is peculiarly exposed to reverses and contingencies; the greatest of which however is produced by (that bane of commerce) war and despotism; which, by causing the loss of some markets, imposing prohibitory duties, increasing the charges of conveyance to and from all others, as also the forcible diversion of capital from the employment of productive to that of unproductive labour, thereby ultimately destroying that capital, cannot fail of causing great distress and loss to some classes of the community, always indeed to the great majority thereof, and which is of course proportionably detrimental to the nations at large. The demand for the produce of agriculture is so far uniform as not to be influenced in any considerable degree by fashion or prejudice, which is not the case with manufactures, many of which are subject to the tastes and caprices of the purchasers. The imposition of a new tax, too, may take away or

expatriate the comparative natural advantage, or skill and capital, which the country before possessed in the manufacture of a particular commodity.

It must not, however, be supposed that distress will be confined to that country alone where such evils originate. It will also be felt in all the countries to which its commodities were previously exported: no country can import except it also export, and if such circumstances should occur to prevent a country from importing the usual amount of foreign commodities, it will proportionably diminish the manufacture of those which were previously exported; and in both countries capital will be diverted from a more to a less beneficial employment,\* for the purpose of obtaining the commodities wanted, or substitutes for them, either from other countries, or at home.

The commencement of war must produce considerable distress in trading countries, not only by merely changing, in a great degree, the nature of the employments in which their respective capitals were before engaged, but because, during the interval, while they are removing to those which new circumstances have made the most profitable, much capital is unemployed, and therefore partly lost, by being

\* We mean, for the community at large.

expended in the present support of its proprietors ; and, at all events, its holders are hereby deprived of its revenue, and the labourers of their usual employment, besides the inevitable loss of much fixed capital invested in machinery, which is rendered useless by the change ; and, at the end of a modern war, the then existing capital of the country is generally burthened to furnish a revenue for capital, which, under the name of national debt, has been borrowed and consumed during its prosecution.

The distress proceeding from those causes is liable to be mistaken for that which may accompany a permanently retrograde state of society ; and it may be difficult to show how that which is of a temporary nature may be clearly distinguished from the other, since it is only in degree, and not in kind, that the difference consists. When, however, such distress immediately accompanies a change from war to peace, our knowledge of such a cause will make it reasonable to believe that the funds for the maintenance of labour have been both materially impaired, and diverted from their usual channels ; but that after a period of suffering, proportioned in extent and duration to such diversion and diminution of capital, and to the burthens laid on the remainder, the nation may again advance in prosperity.

In countries rich in manufactures, where much capital is invested in machinery, more distress will be experienced from a revolution of trade, than in poorer countries; where there is proportionably a much smaller amount of fixed than circulating capital. It is often impossible to divert the machinery which may have been erected for one manufacture to the purpose of another: but the food, clothing, &c. of the labourer in one employment may be devoted to the support of the labourer in another, or the same labourer may change his employment.

This, however, is an evil to which a rich nation must submit, and it would not be more reasonable to complain of it (even if it were, as is generally the case, not brought on by themselves), than it would in a rich merchant to lament that his ship was exposed to the dangers of the sea, whilst his poor neighbour's cottage was safe from all such hazard.\*

Neither is agriculture wholly exempt from such contingencies. War, which interrupts the commerce of states, if it does not always stop

\* A rich and powerful nation can hardly ever have just cause for going to war; her power and wealth will deter her neighbours from offering sufficient provocation to justify it; and if therefore she wantonly engage in unjustifiable war, she doubtless will and ought to experience the baneful effects of her wicked conduct.

the importation of corn, and other raw produce, from particular countries, yet always enhances the cost of such importation; which enhancement of cost immediately operates as a bounty on home production, by which capital is attracted to the land, and the country becomes independent of the one or more from which she formerly imported. At the termination of the war the obstacles to importation are, or should be, removed, and a competition commences, which is destructive to the home grower, who has calculated on continual war; because the bounty having been received by the landholders in the form of increased rent, during the war, they generally endeavour to keep up that rent as long as they possibly can, whereby they do of course ruin those farmers who have taken their leases, and invested their capital, on the strength of such calculations; but the claims on the public for compensation, in the form of prohibition of importation, or any others which have been so impudently insisted on by those men, are futile to the last degree; and more especially so, when compared with those which may be preferred by manufacturers, who, having erected vast and extensive machinery, find it rendered partly or wholly useless by a change in the national politics. Land once cultivated will always yield some produce or other more

abundantly than before; and in very many cases, land, which was previously waste and barren, becomes, after the requisite outlay in cultivation, permanently fertile. The only object by corn bills, and other similar measures, is to keep up war-rents during peace, and therefore such compensation, in any shape, is very much less defensible than it would be if demanded by the manufacturer or merchant for their losses, in manufacturing or trading speculations. It has been urged, as a justifiable reason for imposing such compensation taxes, that it would be for the benefit of a particular class, the employment of whose capital was highly useful in procuring a supply of food, when importation was impeded; but, in the first place, it is false that such compensation taxes would go to the class whose capital has been principally so employed: for they certainly would go into the pockets of the landholders in the shape of rent; and they are a class who did not, as a body, employ capital in the extension of cultivation, and who, therefore, have not so much right to ask for compensation as some other sturdy beggars to insist on alms from every person who passes along the streets or highways.

Secondly, it may be observed, that if it were

true that the taxes on importation would really and bonâ-fide go to those capitalists, viz. the farmers, who have so employed their capitals on the land, it would not be the less true, that they did not lay out a shilling of such capital in the improvement of the land, on any other consideration than that of the prospect of obtaining an adequate profit, together with the return of their capital, within a moderate period; and it may therefore be fairly assumed, that during the late war of 25 years, the greatest part, at least, of such capital has been returned to its proprietors with great profit; and if individual and national advantage did coincide in this case, it cannot give these individuals any right to call on the nation to make up to them the further gains anticipated in their imaginations, of which they may be deprived by their interest becoming opposed to that of their country.\* In short, the sooner our ports are thrown open for the free importation of corn, and all other articles of food, in particular, and the restrictive system abolished for ever, the better it will ultimately be for all parties: nor should unjust, insolent, and unfounded cla-

\* It would appear that the English landholders calculated on being powerful enough to keep the empire at war for ever; for their present pretensions are almost avowedly grounded on the disappointments of those righteous and patriotic expectations.



mours be allowed for a moment to retard the only measure which offers a reasonable prospect of alleviating our present difficulties.— When that wise measure shall be adopted, it will be no longer necessary to force nature: the remaining capital, and the enterprise of the country, will then be turned into those departments of industry in which our physical situation, national character, or political institutions, fit us to excel. The corn of Poland, and the raw cotton of Colombia, will then be exchanged for the wares of Birmingham, and the muslins of Glasgow. The genuine commercial spirit is altogether inconsistent with the dark and shallow policy of monopoly; the nations of the earth are like provinces of the same state: a free and unfettered intercourse is alike productive of general and of local advantage.

With every increase in the supply of corn and with the consequent fall of its price, capital would be withdrawn from the poorer land; and land of a better description, which would then yield no revenue, would become the standard by which the natural price of corn would be regulated. At £4 per quarter, land of an inferior quality, which may be designated by No. 6, might be cultivated. At £3 : 10s, No. 5. At £3, No. 4; and so on. If corn, in consequence of permanent abundance, fell to £3 : 10s. the capital employed on No. 6 would cease to be so em-

ployed ; for it was only when corn was at £4, that it could obtain the general profits, even without paying a revenue ; it would therefore be withdrawn to manufacture these commodities with which all the corn grown on No. 6 would be purchased and imported. In this employment it would necessarily be more productive to its owner, and, through him, to the country, or it would not be withdrawn from the other : for if he could not obtain more corn by purchasing it with a commodity, which he manufactured, than he got from the land which paid no revenue, its price could not be under £4, which will be more fully stated hereafter.\*

\* Whatever capital belonging to the farmer becomes fixed on the land, cannot belong to him beyond the period when his lease expires, and thereafter it belongs to the society ; and no individual has any right to count upon the loss, or gain, which may afterwards accrue therefrom. Whatever profit may be derivable from this capital, will appear in the form of land revenue at the period of its re-letting ; and if, with a given capital, more corn can be obtained from abroad, than can be produced on the land at home, it will then yield no revenue. But this is no disadvantage, however great the capital may have been that had thus been expended on the land. Such capital is spent with a view to augment the produce : that, it should be remembered, is the end. Of what importance then, can it be to the society, whether half this capital be sunk in value, or even annihilated, if they obtain a greater annual quantity of produce ? Those who deplore the loss of capital in this case, have much more cause to deplore that

It has, however, been said, that capital cannot be withdrawn from the land ; that it takes the form of expenses which cannot be recovered, such as fencing, draining, &c. which are necessarily inseparable from the land.\*

But whatever capital may have been so laid out, will continue to yield a profit, though not to the same amount ; and that capital which consists of sheep, hay, corn-ricks, horses, carts, &c. may be withdrawn, and sold ; and it always becomes a matter of calculation whether they shall continue to be employed on the land, notwithstanding the low price of corn ; or whether they shall be sold, and their value transferred to another employment.

Suppose, however, the fact to be as stated, and that no part of the capital could be withdrawn, the farmer would continue to raise corn, and precisely the same quantity too, at whatever price it might sell ; for it could not be his interest to produce less, and if he did not so employ his capital he would obtain from it no return whatever, and yet he might be in a better situation than the manufacturer, whose machinery

which is sunk in the government debt ; and further, it may be demanded, by what right landholders claim to derive advantage from the capital laid out by the farmers ?

\* See, however, some further considerations on this subject, in the chapters on Rent and Bounties, &c.

was set idle ; corn could not be imported, because he would sell it lower than, say £3 : 10s. rather than not sell it at all, and by the supposition the importer could not sell it under that price. Although then, the farmers, who cultivated land of this quality, would undoubtedly be injured in the same manner as manufacturers are, by the fall in the exchangeable value of the commodity which they produced, how would the country be affected? We should have precisely the same quantity of every commodity produced ; but raw produce, and corn, would sell at a much cheaper price. The capital of a country consists of its commodities, and as these would be the same as before, reproduction would go on at the same rate. This low price of corn would, however, only afford the usual profits of capital to the land No. 5, which would then pay no revenue, and the revenue of all better land would fall ; wages would also fall, relatively to profits, which would rise in proportion.\*

An important advantage always results from a relatively low price of corn, in that the divi-

\* But, as we have already observed, extended cultivation may have made land, originally of No. 6 quality, to be permanently equal in fertility to No. 1 ; and, consequently, a permanent increase of rent has been gained by the bounty given to cultivation, in the form of the extraordinary though temporary profits, which have been obtained thereby.

sion of the actual production will increase the fund for the maintenance of labour; forasmuch as more would be allotted, under the name of profits, to the productive class, a less, under the name of revenue, to the unproductive class.

Agriculturists, like all other manufacturers, and particularly in a commercial country, are subject to a reaction which, in an opposite direction, succeeds to the action of strong stimulus. Thus, when war interrupts the importation of corn, its consequent high price attracts capital to the land, from the large profits which such an employment of it affords; this will, probably, cause more capital to be employed, and more raw produce to be brought to market, than the demands of the country require. In such case, the price of corn will fall from the effects of a glut, and much loss will be sustained by the farmers, till the average supply is brought to a level with the average demand, as in other manufactures. Free importation is therefore, consonant to true policy; for, during peace, our poor and waste lands will lay uncultivated, but when war commences, and it appears that corn will not be imported as before, those lands may and will be immediately cultivated; when, agricultural returns being annual, we can, the very first year, render ourselves independent of the nation which may have made war on us.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ON WAGES.

WE have shewn that labour is the sole means whereby the wants of mankind can be, and are, provided for; or, in other words, it is that whereby all commodities are produced; but we have already observed, that there are two sorts of labour which concur in the work of production, viz. immediate labour, and the produce of former labour fixed in something, or other, which can be made conducive to production. These two sorts of labour are generally the property of different individuals, and therefore the production of their joint labour is divisible between them; but a single capitalist, or proprietor of fixed labour, does generally employ several immediate labourers, or engage a single labourer in the production of some article or other, wanted for the use of the capitalist himself. It would be very inconvenient in most cases, and impracticable in others, to divide the income or production, in the commodity itself, between the proprietors of the labour, by which it was produced; and, therefore, it became

necessary that it should be valued by that commodity which forms the most universal medium of exchange : and as the capitalist generally has both the wish and the power to purchase the share of the labourer, it only remains to find a rule by which the value of that share may be estimated ; and that is found by the mutual consent of the capitalist to employ the labourer, and to pay him such a value for his share of their collective labour as may be agreed on, which is what is understood by the term wages ; its meaning being simply the amount of value, wherewith the capitalist can purchase the share of the labourer, and which, like all other marketable subjects, varies temporarily, according to the state of the markets, with respect to demand and supply. If labour be plentiful and capital scarce, the competition of the labourers for employment will enable the capitalist to make advantageous bargains with them, or pay them the least possible share of the value produced, for their labour ; if, on the contrary, capital be plentiful and labourers scarce, the competition of the capitalists will enable the labourers to make similar advantageous bargains for themselves. In both cases, capital and labour will rapidly approach their due proportions to each other, if suffered to proceed in their natural order. In the first case, capital will increase more rapidly

than labour ; in the second, labour will increase faster than capital ; so that in a natural state of things they cannot long remain disproportionate to each other. The commodity produced must, in all cases, suffice to replace the capital employed in its production, and afford an increase to be divided between the capitalists and labourers, under the names of profits and wages, sufficient for their subsistence. Labour, like all subjects of exchange or purchase, has its natural and market price ; the market price of labour can never be (for any great length of time) lower than is absolutely requisite for enabling the labourers to subsist themselves and the families necessary to perpetuate their race.

Nor can the returns of capital, under the name of profits, ever continue long below what is necessary both for the subsistence of the capitalists and that of their families, and also to afford sufficient surplus to replace their capital when worn out or expended, &c.

If capital and population proceed in their due order, without any officious interference therewith on the part of the government, the natural and market price of labour will coincide ; the returns to capital will be sufficiently ample to allow of the labourer's wages being so large as to enable him (in all the temperate regions of the earth at least) to acquire a por-



tion of the necessities and enjoyments adapted to his station in life, sufficient for what he may deem the comfortable existence of himself, and a family of an average number. The profits of capital will also be large enough to allow the same to the capitalists, and also so much more as to afford an adequate motive for the acquisition and accumulation of capital; which motive, indeed, can only be extinguished in the human heart by the extreme of civil and religious oppression.

In the progress of society, the natural price of labour would rise, in consequence of the increased difficulty of producing food for an increasing population, were that difficulty not to be obviated\* by improvements in agriculture; discovery of new markets, in which food and raw produce are cheap; improvements in machinery, by which all manufactured necessities are reduced in value, and increased in quantity; better division and distribution of labour; and by the increasing skill both in science and arts, acquired and communicated by the ingenious part of the community, whereby the very disproportion between the prices of raw produce and manufactured productions, the one rising, and the other falling, as above mention-

\* We mean only, that experience shews this to have been the case hitherto; and, therefore, think it will continue to be the case for at least a very long time to come.

ed, produce an equilibrium provided by nature, and adapted to any increase of population which can take place in a natural order; since if, at first, the labourer had to give a large proportion of food and raw produce for the purchase of his other necessities, and he now has to give but a small proportion, it is evident that he is more likely to be benefited than injured by the change.

The market price of labour can only be reduced below its natural price by the occurrence of bad seasons, tyrannical rulers compelling the labouring classes to support a disproportionately great number of idle or unproductively employed persons, or in causing the destruction of capital, by consuming it unproductively,\* or the prevention of its accumulation by oppression, and its concomitant insecurity of property. When, from the operation of all or any of those causes, the market price of labour is forced below its natural price, the condition of the labourers is most wretched; then poverty deprives them of those comforts

\* The destruction of capital, or the extinction of its natural increase, which prevents its natural accumulation, is equivalent to the destruction of human life, and the prevention of its existence; it follows, therefore, that those who adopt measures causing those effects, are guilty of those crimes, if the adoption of such measures be not forced upon them by an unavoidable necessity.

which nature and custom render absolute necessities; and the removal of the depressing causes can alone raise the market price of labour to a coincidence with its natural price, and thereby enable the labourers again to enjoy the moderate comforts of life, which the natural rate of wages will afford.

In an improving state of society (which is its natural state) the market and natural rates of wages may continue in equilibrium during an indefinite period; for no sooner is the demand for labour (caused by increasing capital) supplied, than a farther increase of capital continues the demand, and causes the further supply of labour; and thus the increase of capital being gradual and constant, the demand for labour will cause a gradual and constant, that is to say, a natural increase of population and riches.

With every improvement in society, with every sudden increase of its capital, if applied to the employment of productive labour, the market wages of labour will rise; but the permanence of their rise will depend on the question,—whether the natural price of labour has also risen; and this again will depend on the rise in the natural price of those necessities on which the wages of labour are expended.

It is not to be understood that the natural price of labour, estimated even in food and

necessaries, is affirmed to be absolutely fixed and constant. It varies at different times in the same country, and very materially differs in different countries. It essentially depends on the habits and customs of the people, and on the relative proportion between the productive powers of labour, and the amount of the contributions levied on them for the support of idleness, priestcraft, kingcraft, and open tyranny. Habit, in some degree, reconciles men to impositions, which, in other countries and circumstances, would not be submitted to. English labourers, taken collectively, would not, as yet, tamely acquiesce in a rate of wages, which could not enable them to acquire any more desirable food for the support of themselves and their families than potatoes, nor to live in better habitations than mud cabins;\* and they might not quietly lie down and die of famine, while they witnessed the exportation of the grain, produced by their *own* labour, from the fields of their *own* country, together with the produce of their flocks and herds, for the purpose of enabling priests of a different religion to amuse themselves in foreign countries; and

\* To say that these are deemed sufficient by the unfortunate people themselves, who are reduced thereto, would be a cruel mockery of their distresses. If meant to express the ostensible sentiments of their wicked tyrants and plunderers, it would doubtless be perfectly correct.

private absentee individuals, who (through the weakness, the ignorance, or wickedness of former governments) have appropriated to their own private use the only just and real public revenue of the country,\* to expend it in idling about the world in a *grand style of profusion*; many of them committing all manner of wickedness and imbibing moral and political diseases of every kind, with which they infect the unhappy country on their return. Indeed, the oppressed people to whom we allude do not deem their comforts sufficient; the contrary may be soon ascertained, by any one who chuses to read newspapers and insurrection acts, &c. &c.

It surely is a matter of serious consideration to a government, of whose laws "Christianity forms part and parcel," whether it be consonant with the extracts from those laws subjoined below, to support such a state of things, and to make defensive and offensive alliances with the Pope of Rome, and the chiefs of the Turkish banditti, or of the Russian or other barbarians, &c., by which to expend the natural increase of capital, in making war on their neighbours, for the support of Mahometanism, popery, priestcraft, despotism, and abuse of every description, under the plea that such wars are

\* Viz. that arising from land.

necessary for the safety of Christianity. "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!"—"If any man will not work, neither shall he eat."—"He that provideth not for his own,\* and especially for those of his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."—"Thou shalt not do evil that good may come."—"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; the Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them," &c. &c.

Quitting the further direct notice of the foregoing subject for the present, we go on to observe, that independently of the variations in the value of money, which necessarily affect money-wages (as already explained, but which we have here supposed to have no operation, as we have considered money to be uniformly of the same value,) it will appear, that wages are subject to a rise or fall, from two causes—

1st. The supply and demand of labourers.

2nd. The price of the commodities on which the wages of labour are expended.

In different circumstances of society the accumulation of capital, or of the means of employing labour, is more or less rapid, and

\* We hardly think the Apostle could admit, that compelling *other* people to provide for them, was a satisfactory mode of obeying his injunction.

must, in all cases, depend on the productive powers of labour, and the freedom of their action. The productive powers of labour are generally greatest, when there is an abundance of fertile land under a free government. In such favourable circumstances, accumulation is often so rapid, that labourers cannot be supplied with the same rapidity as capital.

For, even admitting the truth of the assertion, that, under the most favourable circumstances, population may be doubled in twenty-five years, or even in ten years; yet, under the same favourable circumstances, the whole capital of a country, and consequent means of subsistence, will be doubled in the same or even a shorter period. In that case, wages, during the whole period, would have a tendency to rise, or at least keep above the natural price, because the demand for labour would increase still faster, or as fast as the supply.

In new settlements, where the arts and sciences, the capital, skill, and industry of countries far advanced in knowledge and refinement, are introduced, it is probable that capital has a tendency to increase faster than mankind; and if the deficiency of labourers were not supplied by more populous countries, this tendency would very much raise the relative price of labour, (as is the case in America, notwithstanding the rapid immigration of the most

effective description, both of capitalists and labourers, which she is constantly receiving). In proportion as these countries become populous, and land of a worse quality is taken into cultivation, the tendency to an extraordinary increase of capital diminishes; for the surplus of produce remaining, after satisfying the wants of the existing population, must necessarily be in proportion to the industry of the producers, and the facility of production.

In those countries where there is abundance of fertile lands, but where, from the ignorance, indolence, slavery, and barbarism of the inhabitants, they are exposed to all the evils of want and famine, and of which condition the irrelevant and foolish observation has been made, that "population presses against the limits of the means of subsistence," the effectual and appropriate remedy is to be found in the improvement of their government and the general education of the population: either of these will improve the condition of a people; but both together can only raise them to that degree of prosperity, of which their situation may be susceptible.\* Under a good government, rendered perfectly safe and effective by the universal dissemination of correct princi-

\* General education in correct principles is, probably, incompatible with the existence of a bad government,



ples among the people, increased happiness would certainly be produced. "As the augmentation of people would be the inevitable result, no increase in the population can be too great, as the powers of production are still greater" among the people, which would enable them to preserve those advantages by the general diffusion of education.

We believe the world to have existed nearly six thousand years; and while, on the one side, no instance has yet occurred of any country peopled to the utmost possible limit of the means of subsistence, and, on the other side, very much of the most fertile parts of the earth are still uncultivated, it is not necessary here to discuss the question of what would be the necessary remedies for an over-peopled state of society, if such a state could ever, by possibility, have place on this earth.

The friends of humanity cannot but wish, that in all countries the labourers should be enabled to acquire a proper share of comforts and enjoyments; and that they should not be disabled from making such acquisition by having a disproportionately large number of idle, useless persons, (or, which is as bad or worse, persons engaged in unproductive or mischievous employments) quartered on them; because, when the labourers are thereby reduced to the power of merely gratifying the

fewest wants, and acquiring only the cheapest food, they are exposed to the greatest vicissitudes and miseries. They have no place of refuge from calamity—they cannot seek safety in a lower station—they are already so low that they can fall no lower. On any deficiency of the chief articles of their subsistence, there are few substitutes of which they can avail themselves, and dearth to them is attended with almost all the evils of famine.

In the natural advance of society, the wages of labour will vibrate as far as they are regulated by supply and demand ; but they are principally and ultimately controlled by the price of the commodities in which they are expended.

It is certain, that the same cause which increases land revenue, namely, the increasing difficulty of providing an additional quantity of food with the same proportionate quantity of labour, will raise wages nominally as it regards the labourers, and either nominally or really as regards the capitalists. If such rise be not counteracted by free trade, internal improvements, and useful inventions, either wages or profits, or both, will really fall ; and the land revenue will be really raised in exact proportion.

There is then this essential difference between the rise of land revenue and the rise of

wages, when such rise is caused by a rise in the price of the raw produce,—that the rise in the money value of land revenue is accompanied by an increased share of the produce; not only is the money revenue greater, but the corn revenue also. The receiver, or rather improprator of the land revenue, will have more corn, and each defined measure of that corn will exchange for a greater quantity of all other goods which have not been raised in value. The fate of the labourer will be less happy:—he will receive more money wages, it is true; but his corn wages will be reduced; and not only his command of corn, but his general condition may be deteriorated by his finding it more difficult to maintain the market price of wages, at their natural rate. While the price of corn rises ten per cent., wages will always rise less than 10 per cent.; but land revenue will always rise more, the condition of the labourer will generally decline, and the amount of land revenue will be increased to the receivers thereof.

We have already stated, that a rise in the wages of immediate labour would affect the prices of all commodities, in a greater or less degree; consequently, we need not notice it here; and, therefore, have only further to observe, that on the due observation of the laws which we have now stated, the happiness of by far the greatest part of every community depends

Like all other contracts, wages should be left to the fair and free competition of the market, and should never be controlled by the interference of the legislature, whether directly or indirectly exercised.

In many countries, the condition of the great body of the people is poor and miserable. We have seen that this could not be the case, if capital and population had increased in their natural order; it, therefore, becomes an object of inquiry, to ascertain the causes which have effected the disparity between capital and population, whereby such poverty and misery has been produced in the countries where it is found to prevail.

Fortunately, we are not left in the dark on this interesting subject; for, in the pages of ancient and modern history, we clearly perceive, that in all countries the people were, or are, either sunk into ignorant barbarism, or that the rights and properties of the simple and unsuspecting *many* have been robbed and plundered by means of the treacherous combination formed for that purpose by the cunning and wicked *few*. And our knowledge of the fact, that the great body of the people of every civilized country approach to the condition of poor and miserable, in exact proportion to the degree in which their governments deviate from that which should be founded on the equal na-

tural rights of man, corroborates the proof of our correctness, in attributing to those causes, all the misery which we find in those countries at this day.\*

It is true, that the existence of another cause has been asserted, with great confidence, to be that which has caused all the misery of the social states of man, namely, the laws of God : and this has been boldly maintained in the teeth of historical evidence, and that furnished by our own observation. It is maintained, that the natural power in the human species to increase their number is the real source of this evil. One of the leaders of the sect, of whose opinions the foregoing is the capital tenet, has entered upon an investigation of the physiological constitution of the human female, in order to draw from thence the proof of it. With all due veneration, however, for the profundity of this great man's researches, we will observe here, that, to our apprehension, his reasonings, and those of his great master, on this subject; just prove, what no person of common sense ever doubted, viz. the power of the human species to increase their numbers more or

\* We are of course aware, that ignorance of the true principles of government, may occasion the establishment of that which is bad; it is not the less true, however, that a bad government is the immediate cause of the evil and misery produced by it.

less rapidly, according to the circumstances in which they are placed ; but prove nothing whatever of their tendency to any assignable rate of increase, unconnected with those circumstances, as we will prove hereafter in our examination of the aforesaid grand master, Mr. Malthus', work on this subject. Now the mere possession of power proves nothing, as to whether it will be exerted or not. Men have the power to steal, or rob, from others, &c., or to hang, drown, or burn themselves, &c. ; but is it likely that they will generally exert that power ? The tendency, as stated by those gentlemen, and ministers of Christ, would require quite a different train of argument and facts, of a nature highly curious (more especially if stated by reverend divines), to be brought forward for its proof. To us, indeed, it appears, that the controversy on this subject, from not attending to the distinction between the possession of power and the exertion of that power, is merely verbal, between the *honest* advocates of both parties. We only wish that the evil consequences of the principles asserted, and the reasonings advanced, by the anti-populationists, were not likely to be experienced by any but themselves, and that there was equal humanity discoverable in the arguments advanced by them, as is to be found in those of their opponents. Nevertheless, we readily admit that the

more nearly men are reduced to the condition of domestic animals, the more necessary will it be for their masters to attend to their breeding, as well as their other concerns.

Hypothetical reasonings on the subject, as to the powers or motives of procreation, or of accumulation, cannot be admitted to determine this question: these sort of reasonings, we all know, can be brought to bear on either side of a question, according to the bias of the reasoner; from all such we must appeal to facts, and demand of the anti-populationists to point out to us any one country, at least of the temperate or tropical regions of the earth,\* wherein the great body of the people are poor and miserable, and neither ignorant nor misgoverned; and where no artificial incitement to the increase of population has been held forth to them, and where, consequently, the cause of such a condition may be, perhaps, clearly and solely owing to the natural increase of population being greater than the natural increase of capital. Till this is done, and which, we believe, never has and never will be done, practical and unprejudiced persons will assign such misery to that which is evidently

\* Of course we do not mean the sands of Arabia, or the mountains of Greenland, &c. but countries laying in a tolerable climate, and possessing, at least, a moderate degree of natural fertility.

its ultimate cause, namely, the ignorance, barbarism, or misgovernment of the people, whereby they have not only been incited to increase their numbers unnaturally, or, in other words, beyond what, under such circumstances, could be comfortably maintained; but which has also enabled wicked and traitorous governments to destroy the national capital, and prevent its natural increase; or else, some one class of the people, for the gratification of their evil passions, have ignorantly done it themselves. Capital can be more easily destroyed than population; human beings will submit to great privations for the love of life, and of each other; and if once they are reduced to the lowest degree in the scale of human existence, their oppressors will generally be *able*, and likewise find it *necessary*, to keep them in it. These are the true causes of the misery of mankind; and he who, in his researches, does overlook these evident and adequate artificial causes, and employs sophistry and hypothesis for the purpose of making it appear that human misery is natural, and therefore irremediable,\*

\* It is true, the principal advocates of these doctrines do sometimes assert that, though *natural*, it is not *irremediable*; as if any thing unnatural could be productive of more good than that which is natural. The Rev. Professor Malthus, in his celebrated Essay on Population, to the examination of which we are proceeding, has inserted two sermons on the text of moral restraint; but he candidly admits, that his



lays either his possession of good sense, or else the candour and honesty of his motives, under great and just suspicion. Men selected by the community at large for the purpose of executing the arduous duty of legislation, cannot do much good, and are likely to do much evil, by meddling with the natural tendency of population and capital to increase, and therefore should not attempt any thing further than to take care that no encouragement be given to idleness or oppression—that wealth shall confer respectability on its possessor, only when it has been acquired by honest industry—that no impediment or hinderance shall exist to prevent the acquisition of independence by the poorest classes of the community, who should also be incited by every virtuous means to strive for its attainment: it should be borne in mind, that the result to be aimed at, is to secure to the great body of the people all the happiness which can be derived from the matrimonial union, at the same time avoiding the evils which any artificial incitement to an increase of their numbers would certainly pro-

principal illustrations are fictitious, and merely intended, by some new invention of his own, (similar, we presume, to that of the discovery of the arithmetical and geometrical ratios of increase in food and population,) to prove the benevolence of the Deity. How fictitious suppositions can be fairly brought forward as proofs thereof, we have yet to learn.

duce to them. The preservation of capital, and the universal education of the people, (which alone can eradicate error and superstition), are the only legitimate objects to be kept in view by legislators when occupied on those subjects; and the better informed classes of the community should themselves adhere to the truly Christian precepts of the apostle Paul, already quoted, and not suffer their class-fellows to plunder the fruits of labour from the labourers.

It follows, from what we have observed, that the legislature should equally abstain from any attempts at the forcible creation of fictitious capital, as of offering artificial incitements to the increase of population.\* The rent of the soil of the country, which is the only natural public revenue of the State, should be put in a course of resumption, and faithfully applied to the public service and benefit, in defraying the just expense of its government; in the endowment of seminaries of useful and necessary education, under regulations which should render them effective for that purpose, and hold out to ingenious persons the means of attain-

\* The employment of capital unproductively, and especially in war, is an artificial incitement of the most mischievous description; it causes their existence, and, at the same time, destroys the funds by which that existence should be maintained.

ing the respective objects they may have in view, for the benefit of the community, whether these be travel—learning—the cultivation of knowledge—the inventing and perfecting of improvements in the arts and sciences—or the fitting men for all the higher and more difficult duties of society, and for becoming superintendants in all the more important works by which the domination of the human species is extended over the powers of nature—and to employ the surplus revenue in the cultivation and improvement of the country. These, together with the providing for the external and internal protection of the community, are the only legitimate objects of just legislation and good government.

We are rather surprised to find, that the profound Mr. Mill has been so far imposed upon by the doctrines taught in the Quack School of Political Economy, as to assert,\* that “the limitation of the number of births by *raising wages* will accomplish every thing which we desire, without trouble and without interference; the limitation of the numbers, *if that object can be obtained*, may be carried so far,” says he, “as not only to raise the condition of the labourer to any state of comfort and enjoyment which may be desired, but to *prevent*

\* Elements of Political Economy, page 53.

*entirely* the accumulation of capital." We refer the reader to the examination of professor Malthus, for remarks on the doctrine contained in the above extract. Mr. Mill has also noticed the propositions of Mr. Owen, of New Lanark, for enabling the labouring classes to enjoy their quota of the benefits conferred on mankind by the modern improvements in science and machinery, whereby labour might be employed under great advantages, and with unexampled means of felicity, to the individuals employed. On this statement, Mr. Mill observes, that Mr. Owen *must* intend one of two things;—either that population should go on, or that it should stop;—and then affirms, that whichever of the two he intends, no good consequences, but much evil, will follow. It is, however, possible, that Mr. Owen may intend neither the one nor the other, but merely that it should proceed on in its natural order, according to the circumstances of the society, and which will always be found most consistent with their general and individual felicity; merely expecting, that by means of the projected establishments, the principle of moral restraint (so much insisted on in the *theory* of Mr. Mill's school of Political Economy) should be put in practical operation. Is not a degree of inconsistency manifested by those who insist upon the necessity of moral restraint for avert-

ing the evils of what they are pleased to term, redundant population,\* and yet oppose the man who steps forward, and proposes the only practicable plan which has yet been devised, for putting that principle into effective operation? And can it be believed, that these anti-populationists mean any thing further, than merely to prepare a loop-hole for the purpose of escaping through, from the legitimate consequences of their asserted principles; when they first tell us, that, to be happy, we must be virtuous in the love and practice of moral restraint, and then assert, that, if the most virtuous principles were made general, the most tremendous evils would necessarily follow? Mr. Mill may use the sentence, *If expedients can be found*, as often as he pleases: but we would, nevertheless, be inclined to suppose, that Mr. Owen's plan is one of the only two practicable *expedients* which has been, as yet, discovered, adequate to accomplish the end which Mr. Mill professes to have in view; the other one of these expedients is, a complete reduction in the numbers of the *truly* redundant population,—the splendid pau-

\* Instead of prating about redundant population, emigration, laws of nature, physiological constitutions, &c. &c. the *honest* political economist should lift up his warning voice against those who destroy capital or offer unnatural excitements to the increase of people, which two causes can alone induce redundancy of population.

pers,—absentee land and fund-holders,—placemen,—the sinecurists and the useless idlers; abounding so much in the upper, or rather, idle ranks of society, and living riotously at the expense of the industrious population. Let the State, whenever it is the *true representative* of the people, have the land rent of the country placed at its disposal, subject to the control of the national representatives, in lieu of taxation of every sort; and then it will be found, that the cause of the outcry against the poor laws has been removed; and, that the legislative care of the poor is nearly limited to providing for the executing justice between man and man, and providing for the national education; leaving the rest to themselves and divine providence, upon whom it is time to call for more room, only when we have made the best use of what we have: in other words, when the world is cultivated up to the extent of its natural ability to afford the means of subsistence.\*

For the further discussion of these subjects, I refer the reader to professor Malthus's examination, and I am happy to say, that, in holding

\* Mr. Owen has not desired that "government should forcibly abduct from the people, a part of their income for the purpose of forming the projected establishments." He merely says, in substance, "invest the capital from which the present poor rates are paid, in the formation of such establishments, and relieve yourselves from these rates for ever afterwards."

the opinions I have expressed on these subjects, I am supported by the able author of the excellent work, which this is an attempt to abridge or popularise; as will appear from the following paragraphs:—"Mr. Malthus's great error lies in supposing, that population is only increased by the previous provision of food: that it is food that creates its own demand: that it is by first providing food that encouragement is given to marriage, instead of considering, that the general progress of population is affected by the increase of capital, the consequent demand for labour, and the rise of wages; and that the production of food is but the effect of that demand. It is by giving the workmen more money, or any commodity in which wages are paid, and which has not fallen in value, that his situation is improved. The increase of population, and the increase of food, will generally be the effect of high wages: because, the increase of wages, although it may be in many cases expended in procuring present enjoyments, yet, so great are the delights of domestic society, that, in practice, it is invariably found, that a natural increase of population follows the amended condition of the labourers, and it is only because it does so, that, with the trifling exception above noticed, a new and increased demand arises for food.—This demand, then, is the effect of an increase

of capital and population, but not the cause; it is only because the expenditure of the people takes this direction, that the market price of necessaries exceeds the natural price, and that the quantity of food required, is produced; and it is because the numbers of the people are increased, that wages fall. What motive can a farmer have to produce more corn than is actually demanded, when the consequence would be a depression of price below its natural price, and, consequently, a privation to him of a portion of its profits, by reducing them below the general rate?

“The natural price of labour depends on the price of food, clothing, and other necessaries: we are not, therefore, to take for granted, without further inquiry, that a rise in the price of food alone will raise the price of labour, or check the natural increase of population.

“From manufactured commodities always falling, and raw produce always rising, with the progress of society, an equilibrium is kept up, in the power of supporting and increasing population. In rich populous countries, a labourer, by the sacrifice of a very small portion of his food, is able to provide liberally for all his other wants.

“Population always regulates itself by the funds which are to employ it, and, therefore, always naturally increases or diminishes with



the increase or diminution of productive capital."

"Mr. Say has, however, most satisfactorily shewn, that there is no amount of capital which may not be employed in a country, because demand is only limited by production.

"Is it possible that any man can seriously assert, that the produce of land cannot be increased, if the demand increases?"

## CHAPTER IX.

### ON PROFITS.\*

THE profits of capital in different employments, as already stated, bear a due proportion to each other, and have a tendency to vary all in the same degree and the same direction, and under certain circumstances they advance, or continue stationary. It remains to state the causes which would produce a permanently decreasing rate of profits, if the improvements, perpetually introduced in an advancing state of society, are not suffered to counteract such an effect.

Neither the farmer, who cultivates that quality of land which regulates price, in other words, that land which affords no rent, nor the manufacturer of goods, sacrifice any portion of

\* It will be necessary to recollect, that profit means the wages or produce of capital, whether employed in a fixed or circulating manner, beyond what is necessary to replace or support the employed capital; in which sense, the wages of immediate labour is also divisible into wages and profits; which, altogether, constitute income.

the produce for the payment of land revenue, except in so far as they are consumers of agricultural productions. The whole value of their commodities is divided into two portions; of which, one constitutes the profits of capital, the other the wages of labour.

If wages and capital, and the real price of productions, continued the same, the profits of manufacturers and farmers would remain the same: but it is certain, that wages naturally rise with the rise of corn, and that their profits necessarily fall in proportion.

But, while the profits of the manufacturer would be reduced in exact proportion to the rise in the price of labour, the farmer's profits would also be reduced in the same proportion; and he will moreover not only have to pay, in common with the manufacturer, an increase of wages to each labourer he employs, but will be obliged either to pay rent, or to employ an additional number of labourers, to obtain the same produce; and the rise in the price of raw produce will be proportioned only to that rent, or that additional number, and will not compensate him for the rise of wages.

In the early states of society no share of agricultural produce will belong to the proprietor of the land, whether the proprietary right be vested in the state or in private persons; but will wholly belong to the labour employed on it;

but with the next, and every successive step, in the progress of wealth and population, land of inferior quality to that last cultivated will be taken into cultivation, and the share due to the labour employed thereon, will always be reduced to the amount of the produce derived from the worst land under cultivation; the difference between which, and that of all the other land of superior quality, will become national revenue, (vulgo, rent,) furnished by the community at large; and thus the share of labour is constantly diminishing, and that of revenue constantly increasing, by the laws of nature, without any effort whatever on the part of the State, or of those to whom it may have alienated, or who have usurped that national revenue; and as all capitalists may, in a general sense, be denominated labourers, so the returns to capital, under the name of profits, will be reduced in exact proportion to the augmentation of land revenue, by the increasing price of raw produce, relatively to other commodities.

Although land revenue be paid by all the consumers of raw produce, and the farmer pays only his share as a consumer, yet he has a most decided interest in the keeping of raw produce, and consequently rent, low; because, when the wages of his labourers are once reduced to the lowest sum necessary to supply their na-

tural wants, every rise of wages must cause a corresponding reduction of profits, and which reduction will fall on the farmer as well as on the manufacturer; but proportionately heavier on the former, in consequence of their generally employing more immediate labour and less machinery than the manufacturers, and from the other cause above stated.

It is impossible that the money price of wages should fall, or remain stationary, with a continually increasing price of necessaries; and, therefore, it may be taken for granted, that, under ordinary circumstances, no permanent rise takes place in the price of necessaries, without occasioning or having been preceded by a real rise in the price of wages, and consequent fall of profits.

The effect produced on profits will be nearly the same, if the prices of those other necessaries, besides food, on which the wages of the labourer are chiefly expended, be raised; whether such rise be occasioned by taxation, restriction on importation, or otherwise. The necessity which the labourer will be under of paying an increased price for such necessaries, would oblige him to demand more wages; and whatever increases wages necessarily reduces profits. Even a rise in the price of things not required by the labourer, such as silks, velvets, furniture, &c. if occasioned by more labour

being expended on them, would, by withdrawing labour from other employments, and by the diversion of the additional revenue previously applied to the purchase of those commodities, have the effect of lowering profits; because less real income would be produced, although such fall would not be so clear to a superficial observer as in most other cases.

It is to be understood, that we are speaking of profits and prices of raw produce, or necessities generally; and are of course aware, that there may be partial exceptions to the general rule, arising from any uncommon circumstance, such as an accidental stimulus to agriculture, or to any particular branch of trade, or from bad seasons, or any cause, in short, which may effect an inequality between the natural and market prices of any commodity; but these exceptions only prove the truth of the general rule.

Notwithstanding the tendency of profits to fall with the progress of wealth and population, yet it will only do so if the society preposterously refuse to avail themselves of the means of counteraction already mentioned, or madly destroy part of their capital, and burden the remainder with the payment of the revenue, which could have been produced by the capital so destroyed. If we make a proper use of the faculties with which we are endow-

ed, we need not alarm ourselves by supposing, that the limits of food and population will be reached in any short time, or even much before the period of the *millenium*, when we may safely trust that the Deity will make such alterations in the structure and nature of the earth as may be necessary for the accommodation of our posterity or successors.

On a full view of every circumstance, we shall see cause to conclude, that in all countries, and all times, the rate of profits naturally depends on the quantity of labour requisite to provide necessaries for the labourers on that land, or with that capital, which yields no land revenue. However extensive a country may be, if the lands are of a poor quality, and importation of food be prohibited while the population increase, the profits will be much reduced, and rent will be greatly increased; and, on the contrary, a small country, if it freely permits the importation of food and necessaries, may employ much capital without any great diminution of profits taking place.

A rise of wages will not always raise the prices of commodities in a corresponding degree, but will invariably lower profits;\* but if the prices of all commodities were raised in

\* It may, however, be observed, that all consumers are not labourers and capitalists; and, consequently, prices

proportion, there would be no real rise of wages. If commodities only rise in nominal price by an alteration of the current medium, while the wages of labour really rose, the effects on profits would be the same.

It is, therefore, clear, that any country which permits a free trade in all things, but more particularly in food and other necessities of life, will acquire wealth, and support a population by so much more greater and numerous, than could be immediately supported by the produce of its own soil, as the amount of the commodities which it can export for the purchase of food and necessities. The possible amount of which exports being indefinite, it follows, that the amount of wealth and population to which a country might attain under such a system, is also indefinite, and will be permanently greater than it otherwise would have been, even in case of any occurrence happening to cramp its trade, if it have not discouraged the improvement of the country and the soil, &c. during its prosperity. In the other case, of a country which should prohibit the importation of food, the wealth and population would be bounded by the amount of the

would really rise, at least, to the extent necessary to spread the pressure equally over the whole community, according to the amount of their individual consumption of those commodities.



food and necessaries which its soil could produce; that amount, however, being also indefinite, the population it might support are so likewise, although we may be assured, that its utmost amount must fall very greatly short of what it would be, under the circumstances of the case first supposed; because, in that, it could only be bounded by its share of the total amount of the possible produce of the whole earth; whereas, in the other, it would be bounded by the total possible amount of that one portion of the earth. As yet, the improvements in the production of other commodities have, at least, counterbalanced the enhancement of the price of food, as may be seen by any one who chuses to compare the average market prices a thousand years ago with those of the present period; and who can pretend to say to human knowledge, and its powers of improvement and invention—Thus far shalt thou go, but no further? Let us, then, apply ourselves to the removal of the present causes of human vice and misery, viz. ignorance and misgovernment, leaving to posterity the charge of their own happiness, and the bearing of their own burdens;\* hitherto, wages and profits have increased and decreased together; and

\* It is much to be wished, that we were as solicitous to avoid burdening them with the payment of our debts, as we profess to be respecting their numbers and happiness.

even now, if the capitalist were not forced to contribute a large share of his profits, and the labourer a large share of his wages, to furnish a revenue for consumed capital, and the support of a consequent immense mass of luxurious idleness, both classes would, at this moment, possess, and doubtless use, the power of enjoying more of the necessities and conveniences of life than were ever enjoyed by their ancestors or predecessors at any former period. It, therefore, appears, from the sure deductions of experience, that although capital has been forced upon land of less and less fertility, the profits of capital have not been gradually and incessantly reduced, as has been so roundly asserted. If the capital destroyed during the late war had been productively employed, the annual income of the nation would have been greater than it now is, by at least sixty millions of pounds sterling!!!\*

\* The above is an excellent text for the Rev. Professors and Christian Divines of the purest Christian *Church on Earth* to preach on, whenever they have the higher classes for their auditors.

## CHAPTER X.

### ON RENT.

It remains, that we notice more particularly the variations which will be occasioned in the price of commodities by the increase of population, and consequent creation of rent or land revenue; in order to which, it is necessary to explain its nature, and that of the laws by which its rise or fall is regulated.

Rent is the difference between the produce of the least fertile lands in cultivation and that of all others, of every higher degree of fertility; because, there cannot be two rates of profit on capital employed in agriculture,—and, therefore, the difference will be withdrawn for some other purpose.

If there were no claim on the part of the State, or of individuals, to that portion of the produce, the cultivator would appropriate it to his own use; but, in either case, the produce of the land would not be, in the least, cheapened thereby to the consumers.

In common language, rent is generally confounded with the interest or profit of capital em-

ployed in the improvement of the land, by draining, fencing, applying durable manures, erecting suitable buildings, &c. But a part only of the rent paid by the farmer for a farm, on which these improvements had been made, would be paid in lieu of the surplus produce, or rather surplus fertility, of the soil; the other part would be really paid as profit on the capital which had been employed in those improvements, whether made by a farming tenant or by the landholder. This is a distinction of great importance, in stating the principles which govern rent and profits; for it is found, that the laws which regulate the progress of rent are widely different from those which regulate the progress of profits, and seldom operate in the same direction. In all improved countries, that which is annually paid as land revenue, frequently partaking of both characters,\* is sometimes kept stationary by the

\* If the improvements have been made by former farmers, and are of a durable nature, then the sum paid for their produce is rent; if made by the landlord, it is also rent, so far as the improvements have been of such an enduring description as never to need renewal thenceforward,—as, for instance, the breaking up and mixing different soils, clearing the land of rocks and stones, executing perfect drains, applying manures which have the power of permanently changing the nature of the soil for the better, such as lime, &c.; that is to say, it becomes rent after the lapse of such period as the capital has been repaid to the landholder as a capitalist.

effects of opposing causes; at other times advances or recedes, as one or the other of these causes preponderates. In the future pages of this work, then, whenever we speak of the rent of lands, we must be understood as speaking only of that portion of it, which comes under the description of land revenue alone.

On the first settling of a country in which there is an abundance of rich and fertile land, a very small portion of which is required to be cultivated for the support of the actual population, there can be no creation or appropriation of rent; because there is no part of the land under cultivation superior or inferior to the rest.

If, however, the settlers of such a country had to support a regular government, the land of the country could be made to yield a tax, instead of revenue, from the very first, or, which is the same thing, to yield a proportionate part of the produce for such support; there being this essential difference between abundance of fertile land, and of air, or water, or any other of the gifts of nature, which exist in boundless quantity,—that the community have the power, in the case of land, to subject its use to whatever regulations they may deem fit; but they have not power to subject the occupation of air, or water, &c. to any rules. The brewer, the distiller, the dyer, the miller, make incessant

use of the air and water for the production of their commodities ; but, because such use cannot be bounded by any law, so therefore nothing is paid for it. If all lands had the same properties of unlimited quantity and uniform quality, the state could, nevertheless, levy a revenue from the individual occupiers for the reasons aforementioned. But that would not be rent, but land tax, or tax on the occupiers of land ; because rent, as we have observed, is the difference between the produce obtained by equal quantities of collective labour, from the most inferior lands under cultivation, and that of every superior degree of fertility.

With the first step in the progress of population and wealth, after the land of the first quality has been all taken into cultivation, recourse must be had to the next inferior lands, for providing the requisite supply of food for the increased numbers of the population ; and immediately rent commences on the superior, or first rate lands, or, which is the same thing, the difference between the produce of superior and inferior lands becomes a surplus which constitutes public revenue ; and this result will equally follow the employment of capital on lands of every degree of inferiority, or, in addition to that already employed on the superior lands, if the returns from such additional capital be less than to that originally employed (as

it doubtless will be); for rent is the difference between the produce obtained by equal quantities of capital and labour on the worst land which is cultivated, as merely affording a fair profit but no rent, and that obtained from every other description of better land up to the very best.

The same produce would still be obtained from the best land with the same labour as before, but its exchangeable value would be enhanced, in consequence of the diminished returns obtained by those who employed equal quantities of fresh labour and capital on the less fertile land; and, therefore, such enhancement of value, although caused solely by the progress of the society, and not by any individual exertions for that purpose, would be permanent with an undiminished population, and make it exchange for a greater quantity than before of every other commodity, in the production of which, no additional labour had been employed.

The price of corn, then, is regulated by the quantity of labour and capital bestowed on that quality of land which yields no greater return than is equivalent to the general rates of profit; and therefore corn is not high priced, because a revenue is paid by the farmers of the superior lands, but a revenue is paid because the corn is high priced, in consequence of more labour being necessary for its production; and no re-

duction could take place in its price, though no land-revenue were demanded from the farmers, either by the State or by individuals: such a measure would transform those farmers into land-revenue receivers, and enable them to increase their expenditure accordingly, but would not diminish the quantity of labour necessary to raise corn, and other raw produce; therefore that corn, which is produced by the greatest quantity of labour, is the regulator of the price, and of its exchangeable value. The original rule, therefore, which regulates the exchangeable value of commodities, namely, the comparative quantity and condition of collective labour, by which they are produced, is not at all altered by the payment of rent. Raw material enters into the composition of most commodities, but the value of that raw material, as well as corn, is regulated by the productiveness of the portion of capital last employed on the land, and affording no rent; therefore rent does not affect the price of raw produce.

The foregoing are the causes and reasons by which rent is raised in a country with an increasing population, which prohibits the importation of corn, and other raw produce which its own land cannot supply but by a greater expenditure of labour than would be required for its purchase and importation from other countries. It is, therefore, to be observed,



that if, by means of a free trade, or important improvements in home agriculture, the additional population could be supplied with food at the former, or but a little higher price, the rent and corn would not rise, or but a little higher in amount and exchangeable value. On the other hand, any considerable reduction in the capital of a country, or any diminution of the funds employed in the maintenance of productive labour, would lower rent.\* Population regulates itself by the funds which employ it, and therefore always increases, or becomes stationary; or diminishing with the increase or diminution of the income of productively employed capital; every reduction of which is necessarily followed by a less effective demand for corn, and consequent fall of its price and diminished cultivation. Even, although population should not be reduced, yet, if it be impoverished by taxation, or any other similar cause, the same effects will follow.

Improvements in agriculture are of two kinds, those which increase the productive powers of the land, and those which enable us, by improved machinery, to obtain its produce with less labour. Both tend either to cause a fall in the price of raw produce, or to keep it stationary, while wealth and population is in-

\* We here see one principal cause of the present fall of rent and profits in this country.

creasing; both, therefore, affect rent, but not equality.

The improvements, by which the same land and labour is made to yield a greater produce, are, either the more skilful rotation of crops and the application of more productive manure, or else improvements in agricultural machinery, such as the plough, thrashing machine, better management of horses, &c. which would lower or keep stationary the money-rent, but not the corn-rent of land, because less capital, which is the same thing as less labour, will be employed; but to obtain the same produce, the same quantity of land must still be cultivated.

It is further observable, that difficulty of production raises the exchangeable value of raw produce, and also increases that portion which constitutes land-revenue; it is therefore obvious, that by difficulty of production, the land-holders are benefited in two ways; first, by obtaining a greater share, and, secondly, by the increased value of the commodity of which they receive such share.

Rent does not in any way affect the exchangeable value of commodities, and, if the whole land of the country were, by the operation of natural or supernatural causes, reduced to an average in point of fertility and all other natural advantages, rent would be entirely an-

nihilated,\* the society could not lose any thing whatever by such annihilation, but would be benefited by the whole amount of the productive labour which the present class of landholders would be forced to exercise, in order to obtain their livelihood. It, therefore, appears, that when land revenue is appropriated by a particular class of individuals, their interest, or what is usually denominated the landed interest, becomes directly opposed to that of all the rest of the community; whatever measures are beneficial to the community, by enabling them to obtain the necessaries of life at a cheaper rate, are adverse to the interests of the landholders, and vice versâ: corn bills, and other proceedings of the same nature, are therefore the true legitimate offspring of feudal tyranny.

\* A revenue might, however, still be levied from the occupiers of land, for permission to cultivate the soil as already stated, and would be a tax upon raw produce.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ON THE RENT OF MINES.

THE metals and minerals, like all other things, are obtained by the labour of man, and their value is entirely regulated by the quantity of labour expended in extracting them from the earth, and preparing them for the uses to which they are destined.

If mines were equally fertile, and so abundant that people might work as many as they chose, no rent would be paid: the value of the produce would, in that case, entirely depend on the value of the labour necessary to extract the metal or mineral from the mine, and bring it to market.

But mines, as well as lands, being different in point of fertility, situation, &c. &c., the poorest and least favourably situated mine that is worked, must yield a return to the collective labour employed on it, equivalent to that which can be obtained in any other employment, and the exchangeable value of its produce deter-

mines that of all the other mines of the same metal or mineral; consequently, the difference between its produce and that obtained from every other mine of the same metal or mineral, by means of equal quantities of labour and capital, constitutes the rent of every other particular mine, and such rent does not, in the least, affect the exchangeable value of the metal or mineral derived from those mines.

It, therefore, appears that the principles we have laid down, respecting the rent of land, are applicable to the rent of mines; and it is not, therefore, necessary to enlarge on it further in this place, than to notice, that the only difference (which, however, is only apparent) is, that in the case of rent paid for land: it is in lieu of the inherent, indestructible powers of that soil, to afford a surplus produce over other soils. But the rent of mines being paid, for the surplus of a produce previously formed by nature, only in a definite quantity, and therefore exhaustible, when that period arrives, the mine becomes worthless: the rent paid for liberty to cut down and appropriate self-planted or natural-grown timber, is of the same nature with that paid for the liberty of working mines.

The produce of mining, like that of agricultural labour, is subject to fluctuations in exchangeable value, from similar causes. Any increased difficulty, whereby more labour is

required to produce the same quantity, or any improvement in machinery, any increase in the quantity of the produce obtained by the same quantity of labour, must and will occasion a corresponding fluctuation in the exchangeable value of the former, as well as of the latter.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ON TAXES.

**TAXATION** is usually imposed by governments, for the purpose of defraying their expenditure of every description; and all taxes, other than those on rent, tithes, and dividends, must be ultimately paid by the income arising from the collective labour of the country on which they are imposed. Such impositions are just, in case the revenue arising from the soil of the country be inadequate to its expenditure; but they are merely levied on the just or unjust plea of necessity, in case such revenue be alienated into the hands of individuals, through the ignorance or weakness of the government.

The capital\* of a country consists in its fixed

\* By the term capital, it is always in this work intended to express that part of the fixed labour of a country, which is, or may be, productively employed; and by the term stock, to mean that part of the national capital which the government have (perhaps necessarily) destroyed in war, and for which they have been forced by the holders of fixed property in ge-

and immediate labour : and whether taxes be levied by appropriating a part of that labour itself, or of the returns made to it, which are usually denominated profits and wages, it is equally a tax on the productive capital of the country, which will be retarded in its natural course of advancement, or reduced to a stationary or retrograde state, in a degree exactly corresponding to the magnitude of the cause.

Any country, whose annual productions are greater, equal to, or less, than its annual consumption, does increase, replace, or diminish its capital. Capital may, therefore, be increased by an increased production, by a diminished unproductive consumption, or by both these combined ; and may be made to continue

neral, and the landed interest in particular, to confer on its late proprietors or their assignees that claim on the produce of the remaining existing capital and labour of the country, which is generally expressed by the term national debt ; or, in other words, have burdened the remaining capital of the country with the payment of an equivalent for the produce, which the consumed and fictitiously created, or rather increased capital would, itself, have yielded to the proprietors thereof, if it had still, and in reality, been in existence and productive employment. The term revenue is, in like manner, restricted to mean that arising from the soil of the country, and vulgarly denominated rent ; while the term income will be used to designate that which any individual, or class of individuals, obtain from their employment of the two species of labour, usually termed capital and labour, or collective labour.



stationary, or be diminished, by the single or combined effects of the opposite causes.

It follows, that if additional taxes, or, which is the same thing, additional consumption on the part of the government, can be met by increased production, or diminished unproductive consumption on the part of the people, those taxes will fall upon income, and will not impair the national capital; although they will prevent its possible or natural increase, in a degree corresponding to the amount of the tax. But if such additional taxes be paid wholly, or in part, out of capital, the country will be impoverished by the funds allotted to productive consumption\* being impaired; and the bulk of its population will thereby be reduced in circumstances, and, perhaps, even in numbers. If borrowing on the credit of the existing capital be the mode adopted to raise the taxes, the ultimate effect will be still worse; for it is, in this case, both literally and metaphorically true, that a heavy burden may easily be borne during

\* It must be understood, that all the productions of a country are ultimately consumed: but it makes the greatest difference imaginable, whether they are consumed by those who reproduce, or by those who do not reproduce, another equivalent amount of wealth. When a portion of income of any description whatever is saved, it is a positive addition to capital; but whether such increase be, or be not, permanent, will depend on the use to which it is put.

an hour, although one much lighter would exhaust the bearer completely, if he were obliged to carry it a whole day.

The diminution of national capital, and of national production, will always be in exact proportion to each other : and, therefore, if the same unproductive expenditure on the part of the people, and of the government, continue with a constantly diminishing annual reproduction, the national resources will fall away with increasing rapidity, and be accompanied and followed by distress and ruin.

Notwithstanding the enormous destruction of capital by the immense expenditure of the English government, and its creation of fictitious capital, during the last fifty years, the increased production on the part of the community has doubtless been still greater ; and if the claims for perpetual interest on the amount of the capital so expended had been annihilated together with itself, by its payment being made in fixed property, it would soon have been but little felt by the people, (comparatively speaking).<sup>\*</sup> The extension and improvements of machinery, and consequent increase of commerce and population, have, notwith-

<sup>\*</sup> The anti-populationists may be challenged to point out any previous period of the English history, when a lesser number of capitalists and labourers could have afforded a greater proportional expenditure.

standing the vast portion of the national wealth destroyed in war, been the cause of the extension of agriculture—the increase of shipping and manufactures—the building of grand and spacious docks—the opening of spacious canals, as well as many other expensive undertakings : and whether the career of improvement be continued, or not, will depend upon the ability of the people to bear the present excessive weight of taxation, until it be lightened either by a revolution in the subject of its exaction and application, or by a proportionate increase of population and wealth.

Still, however, it is certain, that all the above-mentioned improvements are but a type of what would have been made, if the sum of from 500 to 1,000 millions, expended in the work of destruction, had been applied to the improvement of the country, and the support of productive labour ;—“ what bounds could imagination set to the welfare and glory of the British isles, if a tenth, or even a twentieth part, of the war expenditure had been annually applied in improving and creating harbours, in bringing our roads to the best state possible, in colonizing upon our waste lands, in reclaiming fens and conquering tracks from the sea, in encouraging the liberal arts, and erecting suitable buildings for education and divine worship, and in making war upon physical and moral evil,

with the whole artillery of wisdom and righteousness, with all the resources of science, and all the ardour of enlightened and enlarged benevolence!"\*

All taxes must either fall on capital or income, or both. If they encroach on capital, they must proportionably diminish that fund, by whose extent that of the productive industry of the country is always regulated; and, if they fall on income, which would be expended within the country itself, they must produce evil, either by lessening the power of accumulation, or forcing the contributors to save the amount of the tax, by making a corresponding diminution of their former unproductive consumption of the necessities and luxuries of life.

If they fall on both capital and income, to a greater extent than the annual income of the country can replace, national ruin must be the ultimate consequence. Some taxes produce these effects in a much greater degree than others; but the great evil of taxation is inherent in its nature, and is manifested in the consequent general amount, and the nature of its effects taken collectively.

Taxes are not necessarily taxes on capital, because they are nominally laid on capital;

\* Vide the Poet Laureat's Letter to William Smith, 1817.

nor on income, because they are nominally laid on income.

Most taxes, laid either on capital or income, will be paid from income, so long as that can bear reduction; and, therefore, as taxation proceeds, or, in other words, as government increases its expenditure on idle persons, or on the employment of unproductive labourers, and supports that expenditure by taxation, the annual enjoyments of the people must be diminished, unless they are enabled, proportionably, to increase their capital and income by extension of trade, adoption of improved machinery, &c. It should be the policy of governments to encourage a disposition to do this, and not to take away or withhold the means of effecting it, and never to lay on such taxes as will inevitably fall on capital, or the income destined to increase or replace it; since, by so doing, they either impair the funds for the maintenance of labour, and thereby directly produce what has been termed a redundant population, (and which is never so redundant as when it is in a diminishing state,)—or else, by diverting the means of future production, reduce the country to a stationary condition.

It appears, that the tax imposers of England have been ignorant of the effect of those taxes they have imposed on the transference of property from the dead to the living, or

from one person to another, in the way of purchase and sale, as also on the borrowing of money, &c.; and on law proceedings; the effect in all these, and similar cases, being to reduce the capital of the property subjected to such taxation. Almost all taxes hitherto levied, exclusive of those on rent, tithes, and dividends, are more or less unthrifty taxes, that increase the revenue of the sovereign, which seldom maintains any but unproductive labourers, at the expense of the capital or income of that part of the people, who seldom maintain any but productive labourers.

Taxes on the transference of property, likewise prevent the national capital from being distributed in the way most beneficial to the community. For the general prosperity, there cannot be too much facility given to the conveyance and exchange of all kinds of property, as it is by such means that capital of every species is likely to find its way into the hand of those who will best employ it, in increasing the productions of the country. Why does an industrious individual wish to sell any or all his property, but that he may employ his funds in some more productive employment? why does another wish to buy, but for the same reason? The exchange increases the general income, by increasing that of individuals.—But if the charges on the transfers are so ex-

orbitant as to prevent or retard the exchange, they are an obstacle to this increase of the general income; such taxes are, nevertheless, easily collected, which, in the apparent opinion of the imposers, is reckoned to compensate for their injurious effects.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### TAXES ON RAW PRODUCE.

HAVING already stated the principle that the price of corn, or other raw produce of the soil, is regulated by the cost of its production on that land, and with that capital, exclusively, which affords no greater return than is equivalent to the general rates of profits in the country, and, consequently, does not, and cannot, pay any revenue; it will follow, that whatever increases the cost of production will raise its price, both nominally and really; whatever reduces it, will reduce the price. If there be a necessity for raising a greater quantity of raw produce, it can only be obtained at a greater cost of production, by employing capital on inferior lands, or on lands already under cultivation, for the purpose of increasing their produce; which increased produce will not, of course, yield the same return to the capital employed in its production, as was obtained by the first portion of capital employed on those lands. Any tax, therefore, which may be imposed on the cultivator or labourer,



whether in the shape of taxes on necessities, land-tax, tithes, or a tax on raw produce, will infallibly raise its exchangeable value; as the remission of such taxes, the employment of improved agricultural machinery, or improvements of any kind, whereby any given quantity of raw produce is obtained by less labour, will inevitably lower its exchangeable value.

A rise in the price of raw produce is the only means by which the cultivator of such land can pay a tax on it, and continue to derive the usual and general profits from this employment of his capital; he, therefore, must and will have the power of raising the price of raw produce, by a sum equal to the tax; which increased price will be paid by the consumers, who are the community at large.

Revenue, it must be remembered, is the excess of the produce obtained, by equal quantities and qualities of labour, from land of every superior degree of fertility over that so obtained from the worst land under cultivation, which yields the general profits of labour and capital, but nothing more.

A tax on corn then would be paid by the consumers of corn, and would raise its exchangeable value. In proportion as raw produce entered into the composition of the other commodities, their exchangeable value also would be raised; they would, in fact, be

indirectly taxed, and their exchangeable value raised in proportion to the amount of that share of the tax levied on them.

A tax on raw produce, or the necessaries of the labourer, would raise wages and lower profits, if the necessaries and comforts of the labourer could not be reduced. In consequence of the natural exertion of the voluntary power of increase possessed by the human species, wages will never continue long much above their natural price; and, in most countries, certain causes\* exist, whose effects tend to reduce the income of common labourers so low, as to render it impossible for that class to bear any considerable proportion of the additional taxation; consequently, if, when reduced to such a condition, they have to pay an additional sum of—say 8s. per quarter for corn, and so in proportion for other necessaries, they would not be able to subsist themselves and families on the same wages as before; wages then must inevitably rise, or else the sum levied from the labourers must be repaid to them in the shape of poor rates, &c.; and, in proportion as wages rose, profits would fall. Government would receive a tax of 8s. a quarter on all the corn consumed in the country;

\* Ecclesiastical and civil tyranny in particular, with their inseparable attendants—ignorance, indolence, and filth.

a-part of which would be paid directly by all the consumers of corn ; the other part would be paid indirectly by those who employed labour, and would affect profits in the same manner as if wages had been raised by an increased demand for labour, compared with the supply, or from an increasing difficulty of obtaining the food and necessities required by the labourer.

A tax on the produce of the land would operate as follows :—

1st. It would raise the price of raw produce by a sum equal to the tax, and which would be paid by each consumer in proportion to his consumption.

2ndly. It would either raise the wages of labour and lower profits, or else deteriorate the condition of the labourers.

3dly. It would force a larger manufacturing capital to be employed in the first stage of all manufactures of taxed raw produce, instead of merely requiring a part of the produce, as in the case of taxes on completed manufactures.

It may then be objected, against such a tax—

1st. That, by raising the wages of labour, and lowering profits, it is an unequal tax, as it affects the income of the farmer, trader and manufacturer, and leaves untaxed the revenue of the landholder, stockholder, and others, enjoying fixed incomes, except what would be paid by them as mere consumers.

2ndly. That there would be a considerable interval between the rise in the price of corn and the rise of wages, during which much distress would be experienced by the labourer.

3dly. That raising wages, and lowering profits, is a preventive of accumulation, and acts in the same way as a natural poverty of soil.

4thly. That, by raising the price of raw produce, the prices of all commodities, into which raw produce enters, would be raised; first, by the amount of the tax,—and next, by the interest of the capital paid as tax, in the first instance; and that, therefore, we should not meet the foreign manufacturer on equal terms, in the general market.

The first objection may be obviated, by taking a portion of revenue from the receivers thereof, by a direct tax, equivalent to that paid by persons having incomes of similar amount. By so doing, all the objects sought by means of an income tax would be obtained, without have recourse to the obnoxious measures of prying into every man's concerns, and arming individuals with powers totally repugnant to the rights, feelings, and habits, of a free country; but a tax on corn would hardly be submitted to in a country possessing any degree of freedom.

The second objection is, in a great degree, well founded; and whenever it becomes neces-

sary to impose such a tax, as is here supposed, it would be the bounden duty of those, by whose power it was imposed, to frame regulations adequate to counteract the evil effects which result to the labouring classes, from a sudden rise in the price of food and necessaries; because they can seldom, or never, get their wages raised with equal celerity; and, consequently, will suffer much distress in the mean while; and their subsequent condition may be materially deteriorated thereby.

A high price of provisions may, however, arise from very different causes, and may, therefore, produce very different effects. It may arise from—

1st. A deficient supply.

2ndly. From a gradually increasing demand, which may be ultimately attended with an increased cost of production.

3dly. From a fall in the value of money, and

4thly. From taxes on necessaries.

These four causes require to be severally examined.

A bad harvest will cause a high price of provisions; and the high price is one of the ways by which the consumption is suited to the state of the supply. If all the purchasers of corn were equally rich, this would take place much more completely; but, according to the greater degree of inequality in the power of pur-

chase, will be that of the sufferings sustained by the different classes of the community; and, in a country where, by means of taxes on the necessaries and conveniences of life, the labourer is deprived of a great part of the reward of his labour, the regulating money-wages, by the price of food, is an incumbent duty on the government; when it has imposed such taxes; as also, that of permitting the free importation of food, and encouraging the adoption of the most useful substitutes. The rise of the money-wages of labour will not raise the price in an equal degree; because, the labourers, whose means are thereby increased, are but a part of the consumers; and, by lowering profits and revenue, it will proportionately deprive the rich of a part of their power of consumption, although such deprivation cannot be productive to them of any inconveniences deserving the name of suffering. Under a natural system, all legislative interference is unwise and pernicious; but a system of *pupillage* renders such interference absolutely *just* and necessary. If we encage a bird, or domesticate an animal, we must attend to their wants, since we have abridged or deprived their powers of providing for themselves.

When a high price of corn is the effect of an increasing demand, it is always preceded or accompanied by an increase of wages; for de-

mand cannot increase without an increase of means in the people to pay for that which they desire. An accumulation of capital naturally produces an increased competition among the employers of labour, and consequent rise in its price. The labourer is then enabled, and induced, to marry sooner than he otherwise could or would do; and, in the course of time, the demand for food and necessaries for his family naturally supersedes that of the other enjoyments, on which the increase of his wages was previously expended. Corn rises, then, because there are those in the society who have improved means of paying for it; and the profits of the farmer is raised above the general level of profits, till the requisite quantity of capital has been employed in the production of the food and necessaries required; whether, after this has taken place, corn shall again fall to its former price, will, as we have elsewhere shewn, depend on the quality of the land from which the increased quantity of corn has been supplied.\* The high wages, in the first instance, proceed from an increase in the demand for labour; inasmuch as it encouraged marriage, it produced the effect of increasing the supply of labour; but when the supply has been obtained, wages

\* If it do not fall, the increase of price will be paid to the landholders in form of rent, if the State permit that to be done.

will again fall to their former price, if corn has fallen to its former price ;—to a higher than the former price, if the increased supply of corn has been produced from land of an inferior quality, and if no corresponding reduction has taken place in the cost of producing other commodities. If the increased demand for labour proceeded from natural causes, there can seldom be any effect produced beyond what the case requires ; but, if the cause were artificial and temporary, a re-action will take place, whereby the wages of labour will be reduced below their natural level ; and then the distress and suffering, which will be thereby occasioned, are chargeable on those by whose measures such artificial causes were put in operation.

A fall or rise in the value of the circulating medium can produce no ultimate rise or fall in the price of labour, or any other commodity ; but, on account of the difficulty which attends the changing old or established wages to an accordance with new circumstances, it will be found, that, when the value of money is falling, and, consequently, the onerous task of raising the wages of labour, in a corresponding degree, is imposed on the labourer, he will, while endeavouring to effect it, be injured thereby. When, on the contrary, the value of money is rising, it becomes the business of the capitalist



to lower wages; and he will then be proportionally injured while so doing.

The third objection is equally applicable to all taxation,\* which, under every form, presents but a choice of evils; if it does not act on profits, or other species of income, it must act on expenditure, or on capital: we, of course, suppose, that an imperious necessity exists, for raising a certain sum by means of a tax; and, therefore, provided the burthen be equally borne by every one, it is quite indifferent, whether it be laid on production, or on profits; whether applied immediately to profits, or, indirectly, by taxing the land, or its produce; but the latter mode has this advantage over other taxes;—that, provided all other income be proportionally taxed, no class of the community can escape it, and each will be made to contribute according to their means.

From taxes on expenditure, a miser or an absentee, deriving an income from the country, may escape; the former, with an income of 10,000*l.* per annum, may not expend 300*l.*; the latter, with the same income, may not expend any part of it whatever in the country

\* When we say, all taxation, we exclude that which may be laid on public revenue, or other fixed incomes, whether derived from land, or tithes, &c.; when we mean to express any of that species of taxation, it would be more correct to term it—resumption of public revenue.

from which it is taken; but from taxes on profits and income, of every description, they cannot wholly escape. The first will contribute to them, either by giving up a part, or the value of a part, of his produce or income in the advanced prices of the necessities of life, essential to production; he will be unable to accumulate at the same rate. The income of the latter will be reduced in proportion to the tax, or to the reduction of the incomes of those from whom it is derived, and their consequent diminished capacity of furnishing it.

Whether a country be insulated from all others or not, it can in no way shift any portion of its taxes from itself to another nation (except by the imposition of a tribute on such other nation, or by imposing an export duty on any article which, without reducing the quantity exported, will proportionately raise its price in the importing country); because, whether a share of the profits of any foreign trade be taken by the government, or whether it all go directly into the pockets of the individuals engaged in it, is immaterial to the foreigner with whom it is carried on; the proportion received by government in the shape of taxes, under the name of customs, excise, &c. is, in all cases, besides those above mentioned, derived from its own subjects alone.

The fourth and last objection remains to be

noticed, and will be found to be, in a considerable degree, well founded ; because, although taxation would raise the prices of commodities, yet they would not require any more money for their home circulation. Increased taxation must, therefore, have the effect of deranging and destroying foreign trade, if not counteracted by improved machinery, &c. &c. ; because we could only buy what we wanted in foreign markets with money ; but, according to the above supposition, we have no more money than is absolutely necessary to circulate our commodities at home, and, consequently, cannot spare any for exportation. Improved machinery, and the discovery of cheaper markets, can alone counteract these effects of taxation, which even then swallow up much, if not all, of the advantages resulting from such improvements and discoveries, all which would otherwise primarily redound to the advantage of its improvers and discoverers, and ultimately to the people at large.

Like most other taxes on commodities, those laid on raw produce, as already observed, affect the prices of commodities unequally, according to the varied proportions in which the two sorts of labour, and the raw produce, enter into their production ; and, in its effects, will, more or less, retard or prevent the exportation of particular commodities, and, therefore, be at-

tended with the same sort of inconveniency and loss that attend the direct taxing of commodities. By the alteration of the natural relation between the value of each, it would, moreover, prevent the best distribution of the capital of the world, which is never so well regulated, as when every commodity is freely allowed to settle at its natural price, unfettered by artificial restraint.

A rise in the price of any commodity, in consequence of taxation, or of difficulty of production, will, in all cases, ultimately be produced by those causes, or either of them; but the duration of the interval, before the market-price will conform to the natural price, must depend on the nature of the commodity, and on the facility with which it can be reduced in quantity. Corn being a commodity indispensably necessary to every one, little effect will be produced on the demand for it, in consequence of a tax; and, therefore, the supply would not probably be long excessive, even if the producers had great difficulty in removing their capitals from the land. For this reason, the price of corn will speedily be raised by taxation, and the farmer will be enabled to transfer all but his own share of the tax from himself to the consumers.

It is, therefore, evident, that the general effects produced by the taxing of commodities

is a rise of their price, whereby exportation, and, consequently, foreign trade, is checked ; since, independent of the usual taxation-effects, the nation is placed under comparative disadvantages, as far as regards the competition in foreign markets. It may, therefore, be said of the indirect tax on commodities, levied by a direct tax on raw produce, as of the direct tax on commodities, that it only presents a choice of evils, the least of which, however, is to be preferred, if a choice must be made.

It has been said, that if duties and drawbacks, &c., were accurately adjusted to the amount of taxation, foreign trade would not be affected thereby. It is, however, impossible to accurately counterbalance taxation by that means, even if no other difficulties were thereby produced than those of the numerous and vexatious regulations, delays, &c. which are necessary for the prevention of fraud ; add to which, the national expense of preventing smuggling. The present system is, however, defective on another account : instead of levying a stamp-duty proportioned to the amount of the exported goods, the same expense, delays, &c., are incurred, in giving bonds, &c. for a quantity of goods of ten pounds, as of ten thousand pounds value ; the consequences of which are, that small parcels of any commodity, which pays or has paid a tax, cannot

be exported advantageously, and the exportation is, therefore, thrown into the hands of great capitalists, who cannot attend to small investments, or, for the above reasons, cannot do it advantageously; whereby exportation is checked, both in the quantity and number of exportable commodities. Many branches of trade, now of great magnitude, have arisen from very small beginnings; but the above system tends to prevent similar advantages being obtained for the future.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### TAXES ON GOLD.

IF the mines from which gold is extracted were situated in this country, and if gold were taxed, its relative value would be lowered, until the produce was reduced in quantity, unless the government should export the amount of the tax; for, if it were brought into the market of the country, and, of course, employed in the purchase of commodities to be expended unproductively, it would thereby reduce the quantity of commodities, while the quantity of money remaining the same, would be depreciated in a corresponding degree. If the produce of the tax was exported, it would be to those nations who were in want of it; and they would be equally willing to purchase it from the people of the exporting country, by whom the commodities obtained in return would probably be consumed productively, whereby the wealth and population of the country would be proportionately increased. Gold, however, not being the na-

tural produce of the country, nor of any one other country, but of several, we need not pursue the discussion of an imagined case any further than merely to observe, that such tax, like all others, would be a transfer of part of the produce of labour, from the individuals to the government. A tax on money would, in its effects, be nearly similar to a tax on gold produced from the mines of the country, unless the government could confine the country to the use of its own produced gold alone, which it never could do, if allowed foreign trade.

If, of every 1000*l.* in the country, government could take 100*l.* by a tax to that amount, the remaining 900*l.* could not purchase more commodities than 900*l.* previously could; but, from the probable mode in which the tax would be employed, as above explained, it is very likely, that the value of money would be depreciated thereby; and, therefore, that the remaining 900*l.* would not be equally valuable afterwards, as the 900*l.* was before the tax was paid.

A tax on the coinage of money, usually denominated seignorage, is, in every sense, equivalent to a tax on money. It has been said, that seignorage is a tax which nobody pays; on which we must observe, that if Nobody could be made to pay taxes, it would doubtless be a very desirable consummation; but as



we are not yet aware of its having been put into execution in the modern financial system, we shall proceed to inquire into the reality of this grand discovery. Suppose that I carry £100 in bullion to the mint, and that 5 per cent. of the whole quantity is retained for the state, I would receive back an £100 in coin; but I could not purchase the same quantity of commodities with the £100 of coin as I could for the £105: it cannot be said that £100 is equivalent to the £105, because the state will bring the £5 into the market, and thereby the currency will be depreciated to that amount; and, if applied unproductively by the state, the whole will be still further depreciated, as has been already shewn. If it were hoarded by the state, or thrown into the sea, the depreciation would not take place: but what, in such a case, would be its use to the state? and how would the gold be furnished, either for hoarding or for exportation?

It may still be said, that, if sent to foreign countries as subsidy, or to pay for supplies furnished for the army or navy, it would save those charges to the nation; but, if coin is the circulating medium, then a determinate quantity of bullion is wanted for that purpose, sufficient to keep up the currency to the necessary value in the *exchange of the world*; and, if the state abstract a part as seignorage, and expend it as

above, then the people must carry their commodities abroad to repurchase the part exported by the state. If the currency be paper, the tax could not be sent abroad, except to be returned for commodities which would produce the same effect; so that the sum of the whole matter is, that seignorage is a tax, and, like all other taxes, is paid by the people; and, therefore, the discovery of a tax to be levied by the state, and paid by nobody, is still a desideratum in the science of political economy.

## CHAPTER XV.

### TAXES ON HOUSES.

**TAXES** on houses, though laid on the occupier, may fall on the proprietor or landholder by causing a diminution of profit or rent. Such a tax may, however, be generally and naturally considered as an additional rent paid by the tenant; because, in an increasing or even a stationary state of society, the demand must continue or increase, people must have houses, and general poverty among the occupiers can alone lower the rent below the relative proportion it bore to other things, previous to the laying on of the tax.

The rent of a house is divisible into two parts, of which the one may be termed the profits of the house-builder's trade, and the other the ground revenue paid for the permission to build thereon, granted by the landholders.

In a stationary or improving state of society the building-rent must always continue so high, as to pay the same interest to the builder for

his capital as he would have got if he had lent it on good security, and also to afford a surplus sufficient to keep the house in constant repair, and to rebuild it within a certain period.

It is evident, therefore, that no diminution can take place in the building-rent under the above-mentioned circumstances, and the same may be affirmed respecting the ground revenue, and that the additional tax will be paid by the occupiers while they have the means of doing so. The general impoverishment of the people can alone cause more than a relative reduction, either on the building-rents or ground revenue, or oblige the receivers of the latter to contribute any part thereof to the tax.

Both the ground revenue of houses, and the ordinary revenue of land, are public revenue, which the landholder enjoys without any care or labour of his own. Though a part (or all) of this revenue should be resumed by the State, in order to defray the expenses thereof, no discouragement will thereby be given to any sort of industry; the annual produce of the land and the labour of the society, the real wealth and revenue of the great body of the people, will be the same, or greater after such a resumption, as

before.—Ground revenue, and the ordinary revenue of land, are, therefore, the only proper subjects of taxation; or, rather, of resumption:—but of this, more hereafter.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### TAXES ON PROFITS.

TAXES on those commodities, which are generally denominated luxuries, fall primarily, and, therefore, chiefly on those who make use of them. A tax on wines is paid by the consumer of wine; a tax on pleasure-horses, or on coaches, is paid by those who provide for themselves such enjoyments, and in exact proportion as they provide them; but taxes on necessities do not affect the consumers of necessities in proportion to the quantity that may be consumed by them, but often in a much higher proportion. A tax on corn, we have observed, not only affects a manufacturer in the proportion that he and his family may consume corn, but it alters the rate of profits of capital, and, therefore, also affects his income. Whatever cause raises the wages of labour artificially lowers the profits of capital; therefore, every tax on every commodity consumed by the labourer, has a tendency to lower the rate of profits.

It, therefore, appears that a tax on the profits of capital will really raise the price of all the commodities produced by its employment, to the consumers thereof, of whom the capitalist and his labourers being a part, he first pays his personal share ; and secondly, in case the wages of the labourers are already so low as not to be capable of any or but little reduction, he pays a part or all of their shares, likewise, in the form of higher wages, by which means he is made to bear more than his fair share of the tax so imposed, because all the rest of the community pay their own share only, in proportion to the quantity of the commodities which they consume ; and, therefore, the imposition of the tax on the profits of all trades and employments\* will alter the relative situation of all parties.

One curious circumstance attending a general tax on profits is, that the profits of the farmer being taxed would be advantageous to the land-holder ; thus shewing, that his interest is not only generally opposed to that of the community of which he is a member, but particularly so to that of the very class with whom it

\* A tax on the profits of the bullion imported would produce the same, and no other effect, than it would do if the mines were in this country, and the profits of the miner were also taxed.

has been erroneously supposed to coincide.

The landlord would be benefited by the tax on the tenant's profits, as he would be compensated for the additional price at which he would purchase his manufactured commodities, if they rose in price; and he would have the same money revenue if, in consequence of a rise in the value of money, commodities sold at their former price. A tax on the profits of the farmer is not a tax proportioned to the gross, but to the nett produce, after all charges have been paid. The proportion, which the nett produce remaining to the cultivator of land of different qualities bore to each other, would remain the same after the imposition of the tax, as before it. If, after the tax, the price of corn and all other commodities remained as before, by a rise in the value of money, both money and corn rent would remain unaltered; but, if the price of corn and every other commodity should rise, in consequence of the tax, which it will do, money rent will rise in the same proportion; so that, in every case, the landholder will either be unaffected or benefited by such a tax.\*

\* That the profits of the farmer only should be taxed, and not the profits of any other capitalist, would be highly beneficial to landlords. It would, in fact, be a tax on the consumers of raw produce, partly for the benefit of the State, and partly for the benefit of the landlords.



A tax on the profits of capital would also affect the stock-holders, if all the commodities consumed by them were to rise in proportion to the tax, although their dividends continued untaxed; but if, from the alteration in the value of money, all commodities were to sink to their former price, the stock-holder would pay nothing towards the tax, if he still continued to receive the same money dividend; and it is evident, that a tax on profits is merely one mode of abstracting from the people a part of the produce of their labour, and its employment by government would have similar effects to that of any other tax, falling under the same description, levied by it, and expended in the usual way.

The discovery of machinery, which materially improves home manufactures, always tends to raise the relative value of money, and, therefore, to encourage its importation. All taxation, all increased impediments, either to the manufacturer or the grower of commodities, tends, on the contrary, to lower the relative value of money, and, therefore, to encourage exportation, if there be any to spare for that purpose; otherwise, to swallow up the benefit of foreign trade in a corresponding degree.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### TAXES ON WAGES.

**TAXES** on wages, like all other taxes, will press chiefly on those who must primarily pay them: they will raise wages, in a proportionate degree, if the labourers are previously reduced to such low wages that they cannot sustain any further diminution thereon; that is to say, if their situation, as to necessities, comforts, and conveniences, admit of it, they will be forced to reduce their expenditure; and according to the degree in which such reduction may be practicable will be the amount of the tax paid by them, and the rise of their wages; and the employers of labour will, accordingly, contribute its whole share, or a part thereof, in the same way as if a tax to the amount of the whole, or such part, were laid on their own profits, partly by raising the prices of the productions of labour, which are created under their management, and by the employment of their capital, and partly by a reduction of their

profits; according, therefore, to the rise of wages, the consumers of the productions of labour will pay a portion of the tax. Were it possible to compel the employers of labour to continue, uninterruptedly, to employ it, whether they would or no, and also to prevent their raising the prices of their productions, a tax on wages would, under such circumstances, be a tax wholly on profits; but those conditions being chimerical, the deductions drawn therefrom must be so likewise.

All the effects which are produced on the profits of capital and the wages of labour, by a natural rise of land revenue, and a rise of necessaries, by the natural progress of society and increasing difficulty of production, will generally follow from a rise of wages in consequence of taxation; and, therefore, the enjoyments of the labourer, as well as those of his employers, will be curtailed by the tax; and not by this tax particularly, but by every other which should raise an equal amount in a similar way, as they would all tend to diminish the fund destined for the maintenance of productive labour.

Taxed commodities will not rise in proportion to the tax, if the demand for it diminish, and if the quantity cannot be immediately reduced; and, unquestionably, the same cause would influence the demand for labour: the

number of labourers cannot be rapidly increased or diminished in proportion to the increase or diminution of the fund which is to employ them. It has been said, that a fund, raised by a tax on wages, would be employed by government in the support of labourers, unproductive indeed, but still labourers, and that it would make no difference to the rest of the community. The absurdity of such assertions, however, will clearly appear by putting it in another form, viz. if government compel a certain number of productive labourers to leave off working, and to be supported by the labour of the remainder, it would produce no alteration in the condition of that remainder! If it could not, then, the more ladies and gentlemen (*alias* idlers) made in this way, the better; and the profound wisdom of the Roman Catholic system (merely in a political point of view) of supporting numerous bands of monks and nuns, at the public expense, is unexceptionable, and is, besides, far more advantageous to the community at large.

Taxes upon wages will operate nearly in the same way as taxes on the necessities of life: both will be chiefly borne by the labouring class, if their enjoyments admit of curtailment; if they do not, then the employers of labour, and the consumers of the productions of labour,

must pay the tax in the manner already explained.

A strange doctrine has been advanced on this subject by a very profound writer,\* namely, that the levying a tax on wages would create a new fund for the employment of labour, and that, in consequence of the competition of the employers of labour, it would raise wages. The wisdom and truth of which doctrine will, we think, be easily discovered, by supposing a number of labourers, say thirteen for instance, having a shilling a day of wages from their employers, to say to each other, let twelve of us contribute thirteen pence a piece to the 13th, who shall set us to our usual work, and when we are done shall return us a shilling a piece, keeping the other shilling to himself for his trouble of superintendence. The object is to cause a real rise of wages! But is it accomplished by the above process? It has been further said, that a tax upon wages would be paid by the capitalist to government, and be employed by it in the employment of labour; but what would the capitalist do with it if it remained in his hands? Would he not employ it in productive labour (if a demand for produce existed) to as much advantage, at least, as go-

\* Vide Mill's Elements of Political Economy.

vernment could or would do? If he employed it in the support of unproductive labour, and government did the same, where could be the increased demand for labour, in consequence of the transference of the funds for its support from the capitalist to the government?

Another celebrated writer, of whom we shall have more to say presently, informs us, that the price of labour, when left to find its natural level, is a most important political barometer, &c. &c. &c.; but, unfortunately, he has not informed us what country he has in his eye, to which such barometer could be applied. It certainly is as inapplicable to the population of the British isles, under their present highly artificial system, as to Turkey.

In a country where vast hordes of idlers are quartered on the labouring part of the community, it is worse than foolish to preach about the natural price of labour. It is heretical and seditious, because the agitation of the subject may prompt the labourers in general to enquire into the existence of the necessity for their supporting such hordes in a style of profuse expenditure and pampered luxury and vice.\*

\* Some of the most vicious habits of the labouring classes have been introduced among them by the classes comprehended under the titles of Nobility, Gentry, &c. &c. Vide Charnock's Hist. Mar. Arch. Preface, page lxxxviii. where the

## CHAP. XVIII.

### TAXES ON OTHER COMMODITIES THAN RAW PRODUCE.

ON the same principle, that a tax on corn would raise the price of corn, a tax on any other commodity would raise the price of that commodity. If the commodity did not rise by a sum equal to the tax (less, by his own share,) it would not give the same profit to the producer which he had before, and he would remove his capital to some other employment, or to some other country, if that were in his power; if it were not, then he must pay the tax out of his profits;\* the taxing of all com-

following paragraph will be found:—"Our gentlemen captains have had the honour to bring drinking, gaming, whoring, swearing, and all impiety, into the navy, and banish all order and sobriety out of their ships. They have had further this ill effect, to bring seamen to covet to act like gentlemen, when gentlemen should learn to act like seamen."

\* It must always be remembered, that, in this point of view, labour is capital; it is the capital of the immediate labourer.

modities will, while money remains at an unaltered value, raise their aggregate prices by a sum greater than the amount of the tax; because, by a rise in the prices of commodities, the dealers therein must employ a greater capital, and consequently derive a greater sum, in the shape of interest, from a given quantity of commodities, after than before the imposition of the tax.

The evils of a system of taxation may be aggravated by more being taken from the people than finds its way into the coffers of the State, as a part, in consequence of its effect on prices, may possibly be 'received by those who are benefited by the peculiar mode in which such taxes are imposed; such taxes are proportionably pernicious; because, when taxes operate fairly, they take the least possible sum from the people, besides what enters into the public treasury of the State. According to the present system of taxation, the very best of all plans of finance is to spend little, and the best of all taxes is that which is the least in amount.

Whatever may be the amount of taxation, and the magnitude of the national burdens, it must, and is, all borne by the labouring classes. All capital, all profits, all income, is derived from their labour, either directly or indirectly; and, therefore, all contributions, whether from



capital, profits, or income, are furnished by the labourers.\* If, in a family, consisting of nine persons, three of these provided by their labour for all the nine, it would surely be a gross falsehood to assert, that the six shares of the unemployed persons were not furnished by those three labourers.

It has been laid down as a sort of axiom, that all taxes on luxuries would fall only on those who paid them; but we see, from the above plain statement, by whom all taxes, as hitherto raised, are ultimately paid. Every man's power of consuming, whether productively or not, is limited by his income. He cannot then be deprived of a part of his income, without being obliged proportionally to reduce his consumption. Hence arises a diminution of demand for these goods, which he no longer consumes, and particularly for those on which the tax is imposed.

Whatever habit has rendered delightful, will be relinquished with reluctance, and will continue to be consumed, notwithstanding the imposition of a heavy tax; but this reluctance is limited, both by the will and the ability of the consumers; and it is accordingly demonstrated

\* By the term labourer, we here mean productive labourers, of every rank and degree, and whether the labour performed be that of the body or mind.

by experience, that an increase in the required amount of taxation often diminishes the produce. Every man has some standard, in his own mind, by which he estimates the value of enjoyments; but that standard is as variable as the human character. The government of a country, whose financial situation has become extremely artificial, by the mischievous policy of accumulating a large national debt and consequent enormous taxation, is therefore particularly subject to failures, from the above causes, in its attempts to raise additional sums by increasing the nominal amount of the taxes already imposed on the community.

Taxes levied on a country for the expense of supporting a war, or defraying any other unproductive or mischievous expenditure, are taken from the productive industry of the country; and, therefore, every saving which can be made from such expenses will be generally added to the capital and income of the country.

When, for the expenses of a year's war, twenty millions are raised by means of a loan, it is not only the twenty millions which are finally withdrawn from the productive capital of the country, but also another million yearly ever afterwards, as interest on those twenty millions; and, since both the interest and capital will generally be employed in supporting unproductive labourers, both will be equally

lost to the country ; because, the interest on that capital, if it had been employed productively by him who lent it, or paid it, to the State, would equally, with any other portion of his capital, have yielded him an income; but that income would have been derived from a real production, and would not have been furnished from the pockets of his fellow-citizens, as is the case of the income of the tax-receiver or stock-holder.

An ingenious attempt is here made, by our author, Mr. Ricardo, to establish an important distinction between the interest of the national debt and the other necessary expenditure of government, by asserting, as follows :—“ By cancelling the national debt, one man’s income might be raised from 1,000*l.* to 1,500*l.*; but another man’s would be lowered from 1,500*l.* to 1,000*l.* These two men’s incomes now amount to 2,500*l.*; they would amount to no more then. If it be the object of government to raise taxes, there would be precisely the same taxable capital and income in one case as in the other. It is not, then, by the payment of the interest on the national debt that a country is distressed, nor is it by the exoneration from payment that it can be relieved. It is only, by saving from income, and retrenching in expenditure, that the national capital can be increased; and neither the income would be

increased, nor the expenditure diminished, by the annihilation of the national debt!!!” The answers to the following questions will, however, tend to place the subject in a true light. Is not the interest of the national debt, in other words, the income of the stock-holders, paid out of the annual taxes of the country? Are not the salaries and pensions of the servants of government, the pay of the full and half-pay officers, and the wages of the soldiers, sailors, labourers, and all other persons in the service of government, also paid out of the annual taxes? and is not the whole the expenditure of the government? How then can it happen, that the annihilation of one portion of the expenditure cannot effect any diminution of the whole; but that any retrenchment in the other portion of that expenditure can alone produce that effect? If thirty millions a year be levied from off the taxable capital and income of the country, and given to a body of men—called stock-holders, can that taxable capital, &c. furnish the same amount of taxes to government as it could have done, if it had not previously paid the aforesaid thirty millions to the stock-holders; in other words, if it were exonerated from the payment of the interest of the national debt? Can government levy thirty millions for itself, and thirty millions more for the stock-holders, and yet levy only one sum

of thirty millions, in all, from off the taxable capital and income of the country? Does no difference take place in the amount of the taxable capital and income of the country, whether thirty millions thereof be annually expended unproductively or reproductively; whether it be consumed by labourers, who replace it with a surplus, or by stock-holders, who, in lieu of reproduction, exhibit a parcel of Stock-Exchange bonds? The truth is, that, in making these assertions, Mr. Ricardo has (unwittingly no doubt) preached the Peel and the Rag-manufactory doctrine, That the national debt is the cause or source of national wealth. The doctrine is now, however, rather too stale; thanks to the Pitt-system, which has put it completely to the proof, and shewn it to be as rotten as the rags themselves, and as baseless as some of the beautiful colours of Peel's own printed cottons. Mr. Ricardo, indeed, has himself fairly disposed of the whole argument in the same chapter, by recommending, that the nation should cause the holders of fixed property to surrender to the stock-holders so much of that property as is mortgaged to them, so as the national labour may get quit of the debt; because, says he, "If, on the breaking out of any future war, we shall not have very considerably reduced our debt, one of two things must happen; either the whole expenses

of that war must be defrayed by taxes raised from year to year, or we must, at the end of that war, if not before, submit to a national bankruptcy." But, if the same taxable capital and income existed, previous to the annihilation of the national debt, as after that had been effected, why should government find any more difficulty in raising loans and taxes during the existence of the national debt than after its annihilation? Is not the taxable capital and income of the country the only source from which taxes can be obtained? What security can government offer to the public creditor, other than the taxable capital and income of the country? If these be equally able to furnish taxes, and be an equally good security for the lenders of money before, as after, the annihilation of the national debt, why should the reduction of that debt be at all necessary, and why should there be any cause of fear, that national bankruptcy would ensue, if it were not very considerably reduced?—Mr. Ricardo, perhaps, thought it necessary to mix up two essentially distinct considerations. The benefit which would result to the country from the annihilation of the government debt is incontestible; but that annihilation can only be accomplished, consonant with justice, by making the fixed property of the nation furnish the necessary amount. National bankruptcy

cannot fairly take place for a greater amount than the excess of the national debt beyond the national property. It is true, the stock-holders may be openly and forcibly defrauded of their rights, by the villainy of their debtors; but those rights are equally good over the rent of the country, with those possessed by any private creditor over the property of his debtor.

Justice and good faith demand, that the great majority of the nation should not permit those who have guaranteed the payment of the interest of the government debt, viz. the land-holders in particular, and all other holders of fixed property in general, fraudulently to break that guarantee, nor induce others to do it for them, nor levy it from off the labour of the country; on the contrary, the nation should compel them to pay the interest of the mortgage which they have contracted, or authorise the stock-holders to foreclose in case of failure. It is not to be tolerated for a moment, that those who have advanced their capital on that security, should be required to forego their equitable claims, on the plea of expediency; for it is impossible that any man, or class of men, in the nation can possess a more valid right to his or their property, of whatever description, than that of the stock-holder to be paid the full interest of the national debt, from

out of the property of those who contracted it; and they are, as already observed, the land-holders in particular, and all other possessors of fixed property in general.

By cancelling the government debt, by assigning to the stock-holders the produce of a tax on rent, &c. to the amount of their present dividends, the whole of the interest annually paid on it would immediately become productive capital; and a number of persons, equal to the whole of its present receivers, would thereupon be withdrawn from the unproductive and added to the productive labour of the country; and would, therefore, not only provide for themselves, and, annually, reproduce the capital employed, but also further add to the productive capital of the country; because, capital, productively employed, is always reproduced with a surplus.

A country, which, by enormous taxation, has so great a portion of its productive capital annually destroyed, would do well to relieve itself from such a plague, by the giving up to the national creditors that portion of its property which has been mortgaged to them, and which is alone necessary to effect its deliverance.—That which is wise in an individual is wise also in a nation. A man, who has a revenue of 500*l.*, derived from fixed property of 10,000*l.* value, out of which he really had to pay 100*l.*



per annum towards the interest of the debt, is really worth only 8,000%.; and would be equally rich, whether he continued to pay 100% per annum, or at once, and for only once, sacrificed 2,000% worth of that property; or, in other words, resigned a share of that amount to the stock-holder, who, of course, could have no objections to be paid off in that manner. The scheme has been often recommended, but we have, I fear, neither wisdom enough, nor virtue enough, to adopt it; but wish to continue to compel the labouring population to pay the debts we have contracted on fixed property. If the holders of property *really* had to pay the stock-holders, they *really* would not wish to take the gratuitous trouble of managing the stock-holders' share, and would readily give up its management to its owners, or to the State, for their use; but they are well aware, that they do not pay it, and that the productively employed labour and capital of the country pays it for them.

No sinking fund can be efficient for the purpose of diminishing the debt, if it be not derived from the excess of the public revenue over the public expenditure. It is to be regretted that the sinking fund in this country has only been such in name; there has been no excess of revenue over expenditure, but the contrary: and the sinking fund has not only been a gross delusion

on the public, but has actually added very greatly to the government debt, and the consequent present distress of the nation.\* There are limits to the price, which, in the form of perpetual taxation, individuals will submit to pay, for the mere privilege of living in their native country, who have the power of leaving it with their capitals. Unfortunately we find, by sad experience, that those who receive the greatest share of the revenue of the country are the least attached to it. There are many more British and Irish nobility, gentry, beneficed clergy, and fund-holders, than there are British labourers residing in France, Italy, and other foreign countries. These classes, who derive their incomes entirely from the labour of their poor countrymen, are spending it on the very foreigners against whom they engaged the nation in wars; for the support of which the country has been subjected to its present ruinous taxation and distress. If England were compelled to pay 5 millions sterling a-year, as a tribute to the continent, every Englishman would justly consider it his first duty to

\* It has been said, that the sinking fund, notwithstanding its humbug nature, deceived the monied men so far as to induce them to lend their money on better terms for the government than they otherwise would have done: but no persons acquainted with that class of people can believe that they did not see through the gross delusion from the very first and take their measures accordingly.

aid in shaking off the enormous impost ; and certainly a war, undertaken for such a purpose, would be just and necessary, if ever a war were so. Nevertheless, Britons tamely suffer the very men belonging to those classes for whose sole benefit the government debt has been incurred, to add to the amount, and aggravate its evils, by collecting and paying to foreigners the above tribute, drained by them from the labour and capital of their country, because, on its expenditure, they make an additional gain for themselves by the cheapness of living and the facility of indulging their beastly appetites in those countries, owing to the comparative trifling taxation to which they are subjected.

It has been said that national debt, being payable to the nation itself, is very different to paying it to foreigners :—to this it may be answered that if a stock-holder or land-holder, or beneficed clergyman, or any other person paid by the public, reside in France or Italy, it is the same thing as though he were a native Frenchman, or Italian ; and it is, besides, perfectly immaterial to the labourer, whether it be an English, Scottish, German, French, or Italian idler who is quartered on him, if that idler resides in a foreign country.

In conclusion of this subject, we may observe, that the interests of individuals in all communities are so connected and ramified through

each other, that, except in the case of the receivers of public revenue,\* no tax can be laid on any particular class alone, but must, and will, affect all the rest of the community in a certain degree: and the knowledge of this truth is the more important, because there appears good reason to believe, that taxes have more readily been submitted to in many instances, from a belief that they only affected the interest of particular classes of individuals. It is also material to know, that if land, tithe, and stockholders, and all persons paid out of the public taxes, are not directly taxed, they alone, and particularly the two former, may escape all taxation of almost any other description, except, indeed, a tax were laid on absenteeism.

Every imposition of a new tax and every increase of that, or any other tax except a tax on revenue, must inevitably produce a redundancy (in other words, an impoverishment) of population in a corresponding degree, because the income which should have gone to the support of productive labour (in order that capital and income might keep up its level to the population of the country) is intercepted, and unproductively consumed, while the population continues to arrange itself as though no interruption had taken place in the means of its

\* Rent, tithes, and dividends.

support. It is evident, then, that the productive labourers, in addition to their former quota of labour, must perform an additional quantity for the supplying of the means of support to those persons who are set idle, or are unproductively employed by means of the tax. If the former class cannot perform additional labour, either by means of their physical inability, or their employers the capitalists not possessing the means of profitably employing more labour than before, they must abstract, from their former earnings, a portion equal to the amount of the tax for the use of those idle or unproductively employed persons aforementioned; in other words, the labouring population must either perform more labour, and employ more capital, for the same wages and profits, or they must reduce their means of comfort and enjoyment by the full amount of that share which they are required to contribute in the shape of taxation: either way, their condition will be deteriorated, and, consequently, their population rendered redundant. Apologists of taxation have attempted to ground their arguments on the basis of insignificance; such a tax (say they) is only a penny of annual contribution for each person; such another is only a farthing, &c &c. They do not seem to be aware of the fact, that between fifty and sixty millions pounds is annually contributed entirely

by the productively employed collective labour of the country ; that is to say, by about, at most, 14 millions of labourers and their families, out of a population of 21 millions, which is, on an average, about £4 for each individual ; or for a labouring man, his wife, and four children, £24 per annum. Those sensible and honest tax apologists may here observe, that the pennies, farthings, &c. amount to a pretty decent annual sum, and that so much as £24 may be composed of those pennies or farthings, which they have pronounced to be so insignificant.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### LAND TAX.

A LAND tax levied in proportion to the rent of land, and varying with every variation of rent, is, in effect, a tax on rent; and as such a tax will not apply to that land which yields no rent, nor to the produce of that capital which is employed on the land with a view to profits merely, and which, consequently, never pays rent, it will not in any way affect the price of raw produce, but will fall only on the land-holders. In no respect would such a tax differ from a tax on rent, or partial resumption of the national revenue; but if a land tax be imposed on all cultivated land, however moderate that tax may be, it will be a tax on produce, and will therefore raise the price of produce. If No. 3 be the land last cultivated, although it should pay no rent, it cannot, after the tax, be cultivated and afford the general rate of profit, unless the general price of produce rise to meet the tax. Either capital will be with-

held from that employment, until the price of corn shall have risen, in consequence of demand, sufficiently to afford the usual rate of profits; or if already employed on such land, it will quit it to seek a more advantageous employment. The tax cannot be removed to the land-holder; for, by the supposition, he receives no rent from that land whose produce forms the standard of price. Such a tax may be proportioned to the quality of the land, and the abundance of its produce, and then its effects differ in no respect from tithes; or it may be a fixed tax per acre on all land cultivated, whatever its quality may be.

A land tax of either description would be a very unequal tax, and would be contrary to one of the four maxims with regard to taxation in general, to which all taxes should conform.

The four maxims are as follows:—

1st. When the national public revenue is inadequate to the support of the government, the subjects ought to contribute towards the making up the deficiency, as nearly as possible in proportion to their respective abilities.

2nd. The tax which each individual is required to pay, ought to be certain, and not arbitrary.

3rd. Every tax ought to be levied at the time, or in the manner in which it is most



likely to be convenient for the contributors to pay it.

4th. Every tax ought to be so constructed, as both to take out and to keep out of the pockets of the people as little as possible, over and above what it brings into the public treasury of the state.

An equal land tax, imposed indiscriminately, and without any regard to the distinction of its quality, on all land cultivated, will raise the price of corn in proportion to the tax paid by the cultivator of the land of the worst quality. On lands of different quality, the employment of the same quantity of capital will yield very different quantities of raw produce.

A tax of this description, then, would be contrary to the fourth maxim; it would take out and keep out of the pockets of the people more than what it brought into the treasury of the state.

The *taille*, in France, before the Revolution, was a tax of this description: those lands only were taxed which were held by an *ignoble* tenure; the price of raw produce rose in proportion to the tax, and, therefore, they whose lands were not taxed were benefited by the artificial increase of their rent. Taxes on raw produce are free from this objection; they raise the price of raw produce, but they take from each

quality of land, a contribution in proportion to its actual produce, and not in proportion to the produce of that which is the least productive.

It is undoubtedly true that the farmer does calculate his probable outgoings of all descriptions, when agreeing with the land-holder for the rent of his farm ; and if, for the tithe paid to the church, or for the tax on the produce of the land, he were not compensated by a rise in the relative value of the produce of his farm, he would naturally deduct them from his rent. For the reasons already given, we cannot have the least doubt, but that they would raise the price of raw produce, and, consequently, would fall on the consumers of it.

Taxation would never, in a free country, be carried so far, as to absorb the whole, or any very large proportion, of the annual increase on its productive capital. If, however, it be carried to such an extent in any country, as to cause an annual diminution of its capital, it cannot be long endured ; or, if endured, it will be constantly absorbing so much of the annual produce of the country, as to occasion the most extensive scenes of misery, famine, and depopulation.

## CHAPTER XX.

### TITHES.

TITHES are a tax on the gross produce of the land, and, like taxes on raw produce, fall wholly on the consumers. They differ from a tax on, or resumption of, national revenue, or rent, inasmuch as they affect land which such a tax would not reach, and raise the price of raw produce which that tax would not alter. Lands of the worst quality, as well as of the best, pay tithes, and exactly according to the quantity of produce obtained from them.

If land of the best quality, or that which pays no revenue, and which regulates the price of corn, yield a sufficient quantity, to give the farmer the usual profits of capital; when the price of wheat is 4*l.* per quarter, the price must rise to 4*l.* 8*s.* before the same profits can be obtained, after the tithes are imposed; because, for every quarter of wheat, the cultivator must pay eight shillings\* to the church;

\* The abolition of tithes would, therefore, be an essential relief, and extremely beneficial to agriculture,—and, of course, to the labouring population also.

and, if he does not obtain the same profits, there is no reason why he should not quit his employment, when he can get them in other trades.

The difference between tithes and taxes on raw produce is, that one is a variable money tax, the other a fixed money tax. In a stationary state of society, where there is neither increased nor diminished facility of producing corn, they will be precisely the same in their effects; for, in such a state, corn will be at an invariable price,—and the tax will, therefore, be also invariable. In either a retrograde state, or in a state in which great improvements are made in agriculture, and where, consequently, raw produce will fall in relative value, tithes will be a lighter tax than a permanent money tax. In a progressive state of society, yet without any marked improvements in agriculture, the price of corn would rise, and tithes would be a heavier tax than a permanent money tax. If corn rose from 4*l.* to 5*l.*, the tithes, on the same land, would advance from eight to ten shillings.

Neither tithes nor money tax will affect the money revenue received by the landholders, but both will materially affect corn revenue. From what we have already stated, it will be understood how a money tax operates on money and corn revenue; and it is equally

evident, that a similar effect is produced by tithes.

One of the chief objections against tithes is, that they are not a permanent and fixed tax ; but, like land revenue, increase in value in proportion as the difficulty of procuring corn increases. If those difficulties should make the price of corn 4*l.*, the tax is 8*s.* ; if they should increase it to 5*l.*, the tax is 10*s.* ; and at 6*l.*, is 12*s.* They not only rise in value, but they increase in amount. Not only is the amount of tax increased from 100,000 quarters to 200,000 quarters, when the produce is increased from one to two millions of quarters ; but, owing to the increased labour necessary to produce the second million, the relative value of raw produce is so advanced, that the 200,000 quarters may be, though only doubled in quantity, yet, in value, three times that of 100,000 quarters, which were paid before.

In an improving state of society, the net produce of land is likely to diminish, in proportion to its gross produce, by the increase of rent, as we have formerly shewn. A tax, increasing with the gross income, and falling on the net income, must necessarily be a very burdensome and very intolerable tax. Tithes are a tenth of the gross, and not of the net produce ; and, therefore, as the society improves in wealth, they must, although the same propor-

tion of the gross produce; become a larger proportion of the net produce.

Tithes are also an uncertain, and therefore an inequitable, tax; for the tithe may be the whole profit of the crop. It is a penalty on agriculture, a prohibition to improve inferior lands; for lands will pay one rent which cannot pay two, and lands will return a profit to the cultivator which cannot pay either revenue or tithe:—all these lands are, by the tithing laws, condemned to barrenness. Mathison says, in his notes on Jamaica, that, in 1810, the tillage of 87,000 acres was suspended, to escape the payment of threepence an acre. What then must be the magnitude of the evil effects of tithes in England and Ireland at this time!

It would, therefore, appear, that much positive benefit would result to the nation at large, from changing the tithes into a tax on rent; in other words, paying the priest out of the general public revenue of the country. It has been said, by a certain clerical advocate, that the clergy have the same right to the tithes as the landholders to the lands; and we are inclined to agree with him, in so far as to admit, that both species of rights have been originally acquired by similar means;—which means we do not, however, believe to have harmonized so well with the character which might have been expected to have been maintained

by the disciples of Jesus Christ, and the successors of his apostles, as with that of the banditti of William, the Frenchman, and his successors.\* Nevertheless, we see not what right the clergy can pretend to tithes beyond the term of their own lives ; and, surely, when a new person is appointed to any office, those who appoint him have a right to settle with him what conditions they please, with respect both to the mode of paying him his salary, perquisites, &c. and also the amount thereof.

It must, however, be understood, that those tithes are a tax on raw produce paid by the consumers only in the case of restricted importation ; if it were free, tithes would be an unequal tax on rent ; but, if an importation duty of, say 1 per cent., were imposed on imported tithable produce, then 1 per cent. of the tithes will become a tax on the consumers of such produce, and 9 per cent. will be paid by rent ; and, in this manner, one will be burdened, and the other relieved, up to an importation duty of 10 per cent., or above, when the tithes are wholly a tax on the consumers of tithable produce.

\* Notwithstanding the wholesale robbery and murder which William dealt in, yet he had so much sense of natural justice left in his breast, as to make those who received the rent of the land bear the civil and military expenses of the country ; so that the appropriation of the land rent to indivi-

## CHAPTER XXI.

### POOR RATES.

**T**AXES on raw produce, and on the profits of the farmer, will fall on the consumer of raw produce.

If a tax were general, and affected equally all profits, whether manufacturing or agricultural, it would either raise the prices of all produce, or weaken the power of money to purchase, which would amount to the same thing. Taxes on rent, or dividends of stock, or on tithes, or revenue of any similar description, are, perhaps, the only taxes which would really fall on those persons on whom they are nominally imposed.

The poor rates are a tax which partakes of the nature of all those taxes, and, under different circumstances, falls on the consumers of raw produce, and goods, and on the revenue of land, and the income derived from capital:—according to the degree in which it bears on manufacturing and agricultural profits and dual use, and the imposition of the whole of the national burdens on the labouring classes, is a grand improvement effected on William's system, by the aristocracy, squirarchy, and clergy.



wages, it will bear on them, and the consumers of their productions; and will have no other effects than those already stated, as resulting from taxes on profits and wages. If the farmer were unable to raise the price of his produce, it would be a tax on revenue, and be paid by the landholder: but we have already seen that this is an imaginary case in an improving country.

The country poor rates are not levied according to the rent which a farmer actually pays to the landholder, it is apportioned to the annual value derived from the land, whether that annual value be naturally derivable, or be only artificially so by the capital of the landholder or tenant, and are, therefore, paid by the consumers of farm produce.

In a society which is extending its agriculture, when poor rates fall with peculiar weight on the land, they will be paid, partly by the employers of capital in a diminution of their profits, and partly by the consumers of raw produce in its increased price. In such a state of things, the tax may be, and, under such circumstances, is often advantageous rather than injurious to the landholders: for, if the tax, paid by the cultivator of the worst land, be higher, in proportion to the quantity of produce obtained, than that paid by the farmers of the more fertile lands, the rise on the price of corn, which will extend

to all corn, will more than compensate the latter for the tax. This advantage will remain with them, during the continuance of their leases: but, it will afterwards be transferred to their landholders. This, then, would be the effects of poor rates in an advancing society; but, in a stationary, or in a retrograde state of the country, so far as capital could not be withdrawn from the land, that part of any further rate, levied for the support of the poor, which fell on agriculture, would be paid during the current leases by the farmers: but, at the expiration of those leases, it would almost wholly fall on the land revenue. The farmer, who, during his former lease, had expended his capital in improving his land, if it were still in his own hands, would be rated for this new tax according to the new value which the land had acquired by its improvement; and this amount he would be obliged to pay during his lease, although his profits might, thereby, be reduced below the general rate of profits: for the capital which he has expended may be so incorporated with the lands that it cannot be removed\* from it. If, indeed, he or his landholder (should it have been expended by him) were able to remove the capital, and thereby reduce the annual value of the land, the rate

\* As to which circumstance, however, see Chap. on Rent.

would proportionably fall, and, as the produce would at the same time be diminished, its price would rise, he would be compensated for the tax by charging it on the consumer, and no part would fall on the rent; but this is impossible, at least with respect to some proportion of the capital; and, consequently, in that proportion, the tax will be paid in such a state of society by the farmers during their leases, and by landholders at their expiration. If the additional tax fell with peculiar severity on manufacturers, it would be productive of similar effects, in similar states of society.—The manufacturers, who employed only circulating capital, would add it to the price of their goods; for there can be no reason why their profits should be reduced below the general rate of profits, when their capitals might be easily removed to agriculture.\* But the ma-

\* In a former part of this work we have noticed the difference between rent, properly so called, and the remuneration paid to the landlord, under that name, for the advantages which the expenditure of his capital has procured to his tenant; but we did not, perhaps, sufficiently distinguish the difference which would arise from the different modes in which this capital might be applied. As a part of this capital, when once expended in the improvements of a farm, is inseparably amalgamated with the land, and tends to increase its productive powers, the remuneration paid to the landholder for its use is, strictly, of the nature of rent, and is subject to all the laws of rent. Whether the improvement be made at the expense of the landholder or the tenant, it

nufacturer who employed fixed capital might be compelled to pay it out of his profits, since he might not have the power of removing his capital to agriculture; and, it must be recollected, that manufactures, generally speaking, not being of such paramount necessity as food is of to the community, their prices cannot be so easily raised to the consumer. Poor rates, therefore, are merely a tax, and not so productive of bad effects as most other taxes, and particularly tithes.

will not be undertaken, in the first instance, unless there is a strong probability that the return will, at least, be equal to the profit that can be made, by the disposition of an equal capital, in any other manner, and the original capital, also, replaced within a certain period; but, when that has been done, the return obtained will ever after be wholly of the nature of rent, and will be subject to all the variations of rent. Some of these expenses, however, only give advantages to the land for a limited period, and do not add, permanently, to its productive powers, being bestowed on buildings and other perishable improvements, which require to be constantly renewed; and, in short, it falls under the description of capital laid out on machinery, &c., from which, the landholder cannot, and ought not to expect to make any permanent addition to his rent. Capital expended on the land by a tenant belongs to the public at the expiration of his lease; and neither the landholder, nor any other individual, can have any right to its revenue afterwards.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### TAXES ON RENT.

A TAX on rent may be properly termed a resumption of a part of the public revenue to the amount of the tax ; for there is no other natural revenue besides rent, all other is impositions, requisitions, and contributions : but, previously to stating what are our own particular views of the subject, we think it best to transcribe the sentiments of a very profound and celebrated writer concerning it, which are, as follows :—

“ It is sufficiently obvious that the share of the rent of land, which may be taken to defray the expenses of the government, does not affect the industry of the country. The cultivation of the land depends upon the capitalist, who devotes himself to that occupation when it affords him the ordinary profits of stock. To him it is a matter of perfect indifference whether he pays the surplus, under the name of rent, to an individual proprietor, or in that of revenue, to a government collector.”\*

\* Vide Mr. Mill's Elements of Political Economy.

In all simple and unsophisticated systems of government, the property in the soil has been acknowledged to have belonged to the community or its representatives—the State ; whether such community were represented by one man, and termed monarchy, or by an assembly, and termed republic: and, accordingly, “in Europe, at one period, the greater part of, at least, the ordinary expenses of the sovereign (or State) were defrayed by land which he held as a proprietor, while the expenses of his military operations was chiefly defrayed by his barons, to whom a property, in certain portions of the land, had been granted on that express condition. In those times, the whole expense of the government, with some trifling exception, was therefore defrayed from the *rent of land*.

“In the principal governments of Asia, almost the whole expenses of the state have, in all ages, been defrayed from the rent of land, but in a manner somewhat different. The land was, and is, held by the immediate cultivators, generally in small portions, with a perpetual and transferable title; but under an obligation of paying, annually, the government demand, which might be increased at the pleasure of the sovereign, and seldom amounted to less than a full rent.

“ If a body of people were to migrate into a new country, and land had not yet become private property, there would be this reason for considering the rent of land as a source peculiarly adapted to supply the exigencies of the government, that industry would not, by that means, sustain the smallest depression: and the expenses of the government would be defrayed without imposing any burden upon any individual. The owners of capital would enjoy its profits, the class of labourers would enjoy their wages, without any deduction whatever; and every man would employ his capital in the way which was really most advantageous, without receiving any inducement, by the mischievous operations of a tax, to remove it from a channel in which it was more, to one in which it would be less, productive to the nation. There is, therefore, a peculiar advantage in reserving the rent of land as a fund for supplying the exigencies of the state.

“ There would be this inconvenience, indeed, in a state of things in which land had not been made private property,—that the rent of the land in a country of a certain extent, and peopled up to a certain degree, would exceed the amount of what government would need to expend. The surplus ought, undoubtedly, to be distributed among the people in the way likely to contribute the most to their happiness; and

there is no way, perhaps, in which this end can be so well accomplished, as by rendering the land private property. As there is no difficulty, however, in rendering the land private property, with the rent liable for a part of the public burdens, so there seems no difficulty in rendering it private property, with the rent answerable for the whole of the public burdens. It would only, in this case, require a greater quantity of land to be a property of equal value. Practice would teach its value as accurately under those, as under present circumstances; and the business of society would, it is evident, proceed without alteration in every other respect.

“Where land has, however, been converted into private property, without making rent, in a peculiar manner, answerable for the public expenses; where it has been bought and sold upon such terms, and the expectations of individuals have been adjusted to that order of things, rent of land could not be taken to supply exclusively the wants of the government, without injustice. It would be partial and unequal taxation, laying the burden of the state upon one set of individuals, and exempting the rest. It is a measure, therefore, never to be thought of by any government which would regulate its proceedings by the principles of justice.



“ That rent, which is bought and sold, however,—that rent upon which the expectations of individuals are founded, and which, therefore, ought to be exempt from any peculiar tax, is the present rent,—or, at least, the present, with some very moderate prospect of improvement. Beyond this, no man’s speculation, either in making a purchase or in making provision for a family, are entitled to extend. Suppose now, that, in these circumstances, it were in the power of the legislature, by an act of its own, all other things remaining the same, to double the net produce of the land; there would be no reason, in point of justice, why the legislature should not, and great reason, in point of expediency, why it should, avail itself of this, its own power, in behalf of the State; should devote as much as might be requisite of this new fund to defray the expenses of the government, and exempt the subjects from any burden on that account. No injury would be done to the original landowner; his rent, such as he had enjoyed it, and, to a great degree, such even as he had expected to enjoy it, would remain the same. A great advantage would, at the same time, accrue to every individual in the community, by exemption from those contributions for the expense of the government, to which he would otherwise have had to submit.

“ But the legislature does possess that power, which I have now spoken of, only as a fiction. By all those measures which increase the amount of population, and the demand for food, the legislature does as certainly increase the net produce of the land, as if it had the power of so doing by a miraculous act. That which it does by a gradual progress in the real, it would do by an immediate operation in the imaginary case, which makes no difference with regard to the result. The original rent which belonged to the owner, upon which he regulated his purchase, if he did purchase, and on which alone, if he had a family to provide for, his arrangements in their favour were to be framed, is easily distinguishable from any addition capable of being made by a slow or a sudden process. If an addition, made by the sudden process, might, without injustice to the owner, be appropriated to the purposes of the State, no reason can be assigned, why an addition by the slow process might not be so appropriated.

“ It is certain, that as population increases, and as capital is applied with less and less productive power to the land, a greater and greater share of the whole of the net produce of the country accrues as rent, while the profits of the capital proportionally decrease. This continual increase, arising from the circumstances

of the community, and from nothing in which the landholders themselves have any share, does seem a fund no less peculiarly fitted for appropriation to the purposes of the State than the whole of the rent in a country where land had never been appropriated. While the original rent of the landholder, that upon which alone all his arrangements, with respect both to himself and his family, must be framed, is secured from any peculiar burdens (not laid on by himself), he can have no reason to complain, should a new source of income, which cost him nothing, be appropriated to the service of the State; and, if so, it evidently makes no difference to the merits of the case, whether the new source is found upon the land, or found any where else."

Rent, if appropriated to the use of private individuals, merely increases the numbers of an idle class of men, whose interest is opposed to that of the society at large; it adds nothing to the resources of a country,—it does not enable it to maintain fleets and armies; but, on the contrary, the country would have a disposable fund, greater by the whole amount of its rent, if its lands were of such a quality as that it could employ the same capital, and obtain the same produce, without generating a rent. But if the rent were reserved, or resumed, it would enlarge the resources of a

country by the whole amount of rent ; and with every progressive step in the increase of population, and consequent cultivation of its inferior lands, the disposable funds of the country would be increased ; and, consequently, its ability of maintaining fleets and armies, and executing the necessary public works and improvements of its soil, would also be increased in a corresponding degree.

Now we have seen, that, originally, the land of this country, as in others, did bear the burdens of the State ; that is to say, the revenue arising therefrom was applied as it naturally ought to be always, and in every country. We have also seen, that, in such a case, the appropriation of this revenue to the service of the State could not hurt any individual, or class of individuals, nor set their interest in opposition to that of the rest of the community ; that no taxation would be necessary ; that the only inconveniences would be of quite a different nature than that of those under which we are now labouring, viz. the revenue would be much greater than the disbursements !

We proceed, therefore, to observe, that the revenue of the land has been usurped during the times of feudal and aristocratical tyranny ; and when, by a combination of these holders of the land, they usurped the revenue of the State, and, in lieu thereof, by means of the same traitorous

combination among themselves, imposed taxes upon the labouring part of the community, who, having been previously reduced by them to a state of slavery, were forced to submit to that their further tyranny and usurpation, as the sovereign also was compelled to submit to their thus usurping the revenue of the State, and to accept of the taxes which they substituted, in lieu thereof, upon the industry of the country. Had their successors taken care to have kept the taxation at a moderate amount, there would have been much injustice in a general resumption of the public revenue; because, those usurped rights have, in many cases, been purchased by innocent individuals, who were in no way benefited by the original usurpation. But the aristocracy, squirarchy, and heads of the clergy, have, in the first place, imposed taxes on the labouring community to the utmost limit of their means of payment; and, in the second, doubled their rent and tithes by corn-bills; and, to crown all, they have contracted an immense debt, which they have termed—National, and for the payment of which, although they have really mortgaged the lands and tithes which they hold, it may be confidently pronounced,—that, if they are not prevented, they will, in case the labouring community acquire the means, compel that community to redeem those mortgages, as they are now

making the labourers buy up the stock, by means of saving-banks, and pay the interest thereon, instead of themselves; and, if, not they, will break faith with their creditors, if they can, and pretend that the nation is bankrupt; to prevent which, and to do justice to all classes, it is proper and expedient that a tax on rent and tithes should immediately be imposed, equal to the amount of the interest of the national debt, to be received by government and paid to the stock-holders; and, likewise, to take measures for abolishing, as soon as possible, an order of men, viz. land-holders, who must always be considered as the internal enemies of the rest of the community: these measures would not be found very difficult to plan or execute, after the above tax was imposed. Let the legislature prohibit all future sales or transfers of land, except to a Board of Commissioners, appointed for that purpose, on the part of the State, whose salaries and emoluments should be made to fall with the rise in the prices they paid for the land, and rise with its fall, &c.; and who should appoint District Committees, to let the lands to the farmers, by public auction, on lease, for a certain and proper number of years: all entails, and laws of that nature, operating to prevent the free sale or purchase of land, should at once be repealed; and thus, in the course of no long time, the debt would

be paid off, taxation abolished, public revenue increased, all opposition of interest would cease, and the classes of land-holders and stock-holders would become an useful addition to the productive labourers of the community; nor would the great body of the aristocracy and squirarchy have any great cause of complaint, for they have mostly placed themselves in the principal offices of the religious, judicial, civil, naval, military, and sinecure departments of government, and attached salaries thereto, of an amount amply sufficient for the comfortable and decent support of themselves and families: and what man among them has any right to claim more, on any account, from the community of which he is a member?

All ground, whether arable or otherwise, not now paying rent, should also be at once taken possession of by the State, and such arable or improvable land cultivated at the expense of the State.\*

The advantages which would accrue to the public from the measures suggested, besides those already noticed, would be incalculably great; the improvements of the soil, so far as

\* We mean, that the lands, which could not pay rents, should be let gratis; or else, to the lowest bidder,—that is, to the person who would take, and actually make use of, such lands for the lowest bonus from Government, which he deemed sufficient for enabling him to cultivate such lands, and obtain a fair profit thereby.

tenants had it in their power to make, would be secured, by the granting of moderately long leases ; and large expensive undertakings could best be carried into effect by means of, and under the auspices of, a Board of Internal Improvements. A navy could be easily kept up, during peace, equal or greater than has ever yet been done during war, and a sufficiently large standing army, for every fair purpose, would be furnished by volunteers from the militia for limited service, a considerable quantity of whom \* could be kept embodied in rotation, and quartered in the unimproved parts of the country, where they could be alternately employed in effecting local improvements, such as roads, drains, canals, clearing away rocks, breaking up and mixing soils, &c. and perfecting themselves in the military exercise and manœuvres. The sea-faring men, also, who were not employed at sea, should, together with a proportion of labourers, be set to construct marine works on the sea coasts, &c. &c. In passing through, or laying in the Downs, (for example), people may reflect on the hundreds of millions spent in ruinous wars, for and against the kings of the opposite coast,

\* N. B. The military-militia should consist of every able-bodied landsman in the nation, between the ages of twenty and forty-five; and the marine militia, of every person, of similar age, following the sea.



the tithe of which expenses would have sufficed to construct break-waters, extending sufficiently far out from each Foreland to make it a sheltered harbour of the grandest description; and the Goodwin Sands, inclosed and fortified on the other side, together with a fortification on each extreme of the break-waters, would generally command the Straits of Dover, and particularly protect the Downs harbour.\* On very many other parts of the coasts of the United Kingdom millions of millions of money might be expended profitably for the nation in similar works,—even the money at present drained from the country by the absentee land, tithe, and fund-holders would defray the expenses of very many grand, useful, and necessary national undertakings.

Certainly, therefore, the modes, hinted at above, for getting rid of the inconveniences of a too great public revenue, would be much better than that of making the land private property, subject to all the burdens of the State; since experience shews us, that, by so doing, a class of men may be raised up, whose interests are contrary to those of all the rest of the nation, and who may very correctly be termed—the Ishmaelites of the community in which

\* Indeed, the thing might even now be done by a Joint-Stock Company, and ultimately be a most profitable concern.

they are suffered to exist ; and, wherever they are so suffered, they are sure, by means of combination and treacherous encroachment, to ultimately usurp the whole public revenue, and succeed, as they have done in this country, in substituting, in lieu thereof, taxation on labour, —or, in other words, plunder of individual property. The wisdom and righteousness of a great land-holding aristocracy, 'squirarchy, and State-clergy, is perfectly visible in the game and smuggling laws, the transactions at Manchester, &c. ; and no better or more correct exposition of their principles can be afforded or desired than is to be found therein.

Rent, then, is the only proper subject of taxation ; and a tax on rent, at least, to the amount of the interest of the national debt, should be immediately levied from the land and titheholders, as that is a tax which they have virtually imposed upon themselves, although they have hitherto eluded its payment.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### EFFECTS OF ACCUMULATION ON PROFITS AND INTEREST.

FROM our investigations into the nature of capital and profit, it is clear, that no accumulation will permanently or progressively lower profits, unless there be some permanent and progressive cause, occasioning a real rise of wages, without a corresponding rise of prices or fall in the cost of production, by means of machinery, freedom of trade, &c. If the funds for the maintenance of labour were doubled, trebled, or quadrupled, there could not long be any difficulty in procuring the requisite number of hands to be employed by those funds; and, if the increasing difficulty of procuring constant additions to the food of a country were counterbalanced or obviated by the use and improvement of machinery, or freedom of trade, there are no limits within which the population and wealth of such a country could be restricted, (and, more especially, if freed from taxation

by the appropriation of its rents to the public service); at least, none short of the period when the whole earth shall be civilized and cultivated to the highest possible degree, which period, if we are to judge from experience, is so very remote as not to merit attention from practical people; since, after looking at the relative prices of corn, and other commodities, one thousand years ago, and comparing them with those of the present time, we see no very apparent reason for being frightened at the increasing difficulty of providing food for the additional number of labourers which any additional capital formed, by the effects of accumulation of profit and interest, would employ.

Peculiar circumstances in the condition of a country may occur, through the operation of which, capital may not accumulate so fast as it can be employed; and large profits, together with high wages, may, in consequence, accrue both to the capitalists and labourers; but such a state of things can only be temporary, and must gradually fall into that state, wherein a regular—that is to say, a natural rate of profits and wages will have place; and such a rate may continue, during an indefinite period of time, if all things are suffered to proceed in their natural course, and every man allowed to reap the fruits of his own labour; because, that as capital is increased, the work to be

effected thereby is increased in the same proportion; there is, therefore, no boundary to the amount of capital which may be advantageously employed in a country, because demand is only limited by production. No man produces, but with a view to consume or sell; and he never sells, but with an intention to purchase some other commodities, which he esteems more useful, or more gratifying, or more contributive, to future production. By producing, then, he necessarily becomes either the consumer of those commodities, or the purchaser and consumer of those of some other person.

There cannot, then, be accumulated in a country any amount of capital, however great, which cannot be employed productively, unless prevented by artificial causes: while the profits of capital are at the natural rate, men will have a sufficient motive for accumulation, and which, indeed, they always will have; for, however low the profits of capital may be, still the greater the amount of capital, the greater will always be the amount of profits. Whilst a man has any wish for gratification unsupplied, and has value to offer in exchange for it, he will make the demand, and it will be supplied. If a man, deriving a revenue of 100,000*l.* per annum from the employment of capital, were to acquire 100,000*l.* more, he would not be

under the necessity of keeping it unproductive, but might either employ it himself productively, or lend it to some other person for that purpose, whereby increased demand and supply would follow.

Whether such increase of productions, and consequent demand thereby occasioned, may, or may not, lower profits, will depend solely on the rise of wages, accompanied by an inability to raise prices in a corresponding degree; and a real rise of wages, excepting for a very limited period, depends on the facility of producing or procuring the food and necessities of the labourers.

Another case, in which accumulation of capital may be attended with a fall of profits, is when, with a low price of food, &c. capital accumulates faster than population increases; but this state of things cannot continue for any length of time; because, in the natural progress of society, the supply of labourers will always ultimately be in due proportion to the means of supporting them, whether those be so employed or not.

The desire of food is limited in every person by the narrow capacity of the human stomach; but the desire of conveniences and ornaments, of buildings, dress, furniture, equipage, the possession of rare and curious productions, artificial or natural, seems to have no limit.

The wish to obtain or possess some or all of these, is implanted in every man's breast; nothing is required but the means, and nothing can afford the means but an increase of production. Nature, then, has necessarily limited the amount of capital which can, at any one time, be profitably engaged in agriculture; but she has placed no limits to the amount of capital that may be employed in procuring the conveniences and ornaments of life. To procure these gratifications in the greatest abundance is the object in view of those who employ themselves in producing or procuring them; and it is only because the foreign or carrying trade will best accomplish it, that men engage in them, rather than in manufacturing the commodities required, or substitutes for them, at home. When merchants engage their capital in foreign, or in the carrying trade, it is always from choice, and never from necessity; it is because, in that trade, their profits—and, consequently, the general profits of the country,—will be somewhat greater than if employed in the home trade. We manufacture commodities, and with them buy goods abroad; because, we can thereby obtain a greater quantity than we could make at home; but if, from peculiar circumstances, we were deprived of such trade, we would immediately manufacture the goods wanted, or substitutes

for them, at home. But if we can be supplied with the commodity cheaper from a foreign country than we ourselves can produce or manufacture it, better buy it from thence, with a part of the produce of our industry, employed in a way in which we have some advantage. The general industry of the country, being in proportion to the capital which employs it, will not thereby be diminished, but rather employed to the greatest advantage.

It follows, then, that there is no limit to demand, no limit to the employment of capital, while it yields any profit ; and that, however abundant capital may become, there is no other natural adequate reason for a fall of profits, but a real rise of wages ; and further, that the only permanent cause of the real rise of wages, is the inability, whether natural or artificial, of producing or procuring food and necessaries for the increasing number of workmen.

It is extremely difficult to say, what is the usual rate of the profits of capital. Profit is so fluctuating, as to make it difficult to say, either what is, or what ought to be, its average rate. To judge with precision of what it has formerly been, or of what it will be hereafter, is impossible. The market rate of interest, if it could be determined with precision, or accurately known, for any considerable period,



would be, in the absence of all collateral information, a tolerably correct criterion by which to estimate the rate of profits. But, in most countries, the government, in its senseless rage for intermeddling in all the concerns of its subjects, has prevented a fair and free rate of interest by the imposition of heavy and ruinous penalties on all those who take more than the rate fixed by law. Those laws are, doubtless, frequently evaded,—but in what degree, cannot be known.

Nevertheless, there are several other causes which may occasion variation in the rate of interest. These are, the comparative general security of property, amount of taxation, due administration of justice, stability of government, and also the nature of the laws of the particular country. Those circumstances and considerations will materially influence the rate of interest, at all times, and in all countries.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### BOUNTIES ON EXPORTATION, AND PROHIBITIONS OF IMPORTATION.

A BOUNTY on the exportation of raw produce, corn for instance, is particularly unwise, for its price is thereby lowered to the foreign consumer by the nett amount of bounty, after deducting the charges of carriage and profits of the corn merchant, which charges and profits being paid for unproductive labour, are quite lost, both to home and foreign consumers, and the corn will be raised in the home markets according to the increased difficulty of production, whereby, as we have already shewn, the landholders will receive an increase of rent, which, together with the bounty, will be paid out of the pockets of the home consumers.

If there be no increase occasioned by the bounty on the cost, or difficulty of production, there will be no permanent rise of price in the home market; the bounty will, however, be a tax on the nation, for the benefit of the landholders and the foreign consumers: the first

will receive it in the form of an addition to their revenue, without having a shadow of right to it, and the other will receive it in a saving of expenditure in the article of food. But such a tax would also, like all other taxes, cause a rise of prices. By a continued bounty on the exportation of corn, there would, without doubt, be created a permanent rise in the price of corn, which could not fail to raise the land revenue. Landholders, then, have a permanent interest in bounties on the exportation, and prohibitions of the importation of corn, but the interest of all the rest of the community is, that it should be perfectly free.—Manufacturers, unlike landholders, have no permanent interest in establishing high duties on the importation, and bounties on the exportation of commodities, although monopolists have.

A bounty on the exportation of manufactures will undoubtedly raise their market price for a short time, but will not raise their natural price. The labour of 200 men will produce double the quantity of manufactures that 100 produced before; consequently, when the requisite quantity of capital is employed in supplying the requisite quantity of manufactures, they will again fall to their natural price. It is then only during the interval between the rise in the market price of commodities, and till the additional supply is obtained, that the ma-

manufacturers will enjoy high profits; so soon as the prices subside to their natural level, profits will sink to that of the general rate.

Instead of comparing the interest of the manufacturers with the interest of the landholders, it should be compared with that of the farmers, which is very distinct from that of the landholders. Neither manufacturers nor farmers have any interest in the rise of the natural prices of their commodities or productions, though they are benefited while the market price of those productions exceed their natural price. On the contrary, landholders have the most decided interest in the rise of the natural price of corn, or any other raw productions of the soil; for the rise of rent is (as we have already demonstrated) the inevitable consequence of the increased difficulty of raising raw produce, without which its natural price cannot rise. Now, as bounties on the exportation, and prohibitions on the importation, of corn or other productions of the soil, increase the demand and force us to the cultivation of poorer lands, they necessarily occasion an increased difficulty of production, and consequent rise of price, &c.

The general effect of high duties on importation, and bounties on exportation, is to divert a portion of capital to an employment which it would not naturally seek. It causes a perm

cious distribution of the national capital or general funds of the society : it bribes a manufacturer to continue in a comparatively less profitable employment ; and it is, in most cases, one of the worst species of taxation ; for it does not give to the foreign country all that it takes away from the home country, the balance of loss being made up by the less advantageous distribution of the general capital ; which balance is, through that particular country, absolutely lost to the world, by the forced distribution of its funds ; and diminished production is the consequence, not of corn probably, but of some other necessary articles or means of enjoyment.

Dr. Smith has exposed the wickedness and folly of the mercantile-monopoly system, and the injurious effects it produces and has produced ; the sole aim of that system was and is to raise the price of commodities in the home market, by prohibiting foreign and, in some cases, home competition also ; but this system is, nevertheless, not more injurious to the agricultural classes, than to any other part of the community. By forcing capital into channels, where it would not otherwise flow, it diminishes the amount of productions, and the increase of price is a most mischievous tax on the community at large. The price, though permanently higher, is not caused by scarcity, but by arti-

ficial difficulty in production ; but, although the sellers of those commodities get higher prices than they would get under a free system, they do not sell them at higher profits after the requisite amount of capital is employed in producing them.

The manufacturers, as being consumers also, have to pay an additional price for commodities, subjected to the operation of the mercantile monopoly system ; and, therefore, Dr. Smith is wrong in stating, that the artificial enhancement of price, occasioned by corporation laws and high duties on the importation of foreign commodities, was, or is, paid by any particular class, and not by the community at large.

It becomes the more necessary to make the foregoing remarks, because, in the present day, many wrong-headed people\* think, and write, and clamour, about giving protection from taxation to this or that particular class of persons, or mode of employing capital, by imposing taxes on the rest of the community for that purpose ; and the authority of Adam Smith is quoted by the landholders for their presumption in requiring and imposing similar high duties on the importation of foreign corn, as on

\* A Mr. Pinsent, merchant and broker, in London, for example.

that of foreign manufactures or commodities :— because, by one error in legislation, the cost of production, and therefore the prices of various commodities, are artificially raised to the consumers; without in the least benefiting the producers, the country has been audaciously called upon on the plea of justice, forsooth, quietly to sanction corn-bills, &c. and thus to submit to fresh exactions for the exclusive benefit of the landholders, who have not a shadow of right thereto.

Because, for the support of the government, or in consequence of the mistaken views of national advantage,\* we are made to pay an additional price for our linen, muslin, or cotton; it is pretended to be consonant to justice that we should also pay for the exclusive benefit of the landholders, (those usurpers of the public revenue) an additional price for our corn, and other necessities produced by our own labour

\* If it be deemed necessary to encourage agriculture, by keeping the price of corn permanently higher than in other countries, let the average difference of price be taken every five years, as a rule for the amount of the tax to be levied on rent for the use of the State, and paid as a bounty on production. How preposterous is the mode hitherto pursued, of permitting landholders artificially to raise rents, by artificially raising prices for their sole and exclusive benefit!

from the soil of our country ! Because, (for the above mentioned reasons), in the general distribution of labour, we have prevented the greatest amount of productions from being obtained by our portion of that labour in manufactured commodities, we should further impoverish ourselves by diminishing the productive powers of the general labour, in the supply of raw produce for the exclusive advantage of that class of individuals, who, of all others, have the least title to any such boon at the expense of the rest of the community ! It would, certainly, be much wiser to answer those persons by resuming so much of the land revenue for the use of the State, as may suffice to pay the interest of the national debt, instead of levying it from off the labour of the country, and hasten to correct the errors which a mistaken policy has caused us to adopt, by immediately commencing a gradual recurrence to the sound principle of an universally free trade.

If, for the purchase of a pipe of wine, any individual could export bullion, or any other commodity which was the produce, or was acquired by the produce, of an hundred days' labour ; and if government, by prohibiting the exportation of bullion, or such other commodity, make it necessary to purchase the wine with a commodity which was the produce, or



was acquired by the produce of an hundred and five days' labour, the produce of five days' labour is lost to the individual, and, through him, to the country ; and, if similar transactions were to take place between individuals in different provinces\* of the same country or State, similar disadvantage would attend a fettered, and similar advantage an unfettered commercial intercourse. A manufacturer will work up more iron with the same capital, the price of labour being the same, where coals are plentiful, than where they are scarce, and the country will be benefited by the difference ; but if coals are no where plentiful, and he import iron, and can get the additional quantity by the manufacturing with this same capital and labour some other commodity, he will, in like manner, benefit himself and his country by the additional quantity of iron. We have seen that all trade, whether foreign or domestic, is beneficial only by increasing the quantity of productions. We shall have no greater value, whether we carry on the most beneficial home and foreign trade ; or, in consequence of being fettered by prohibitory laws, or bribed by bounties levied

\* Colonies ought to be considered and treated as provinces of the same State, whether situated in the remotest ocean, or in the heart of the parent country.

on our fellow citizens, so as to reduce the community to that which is the least advantageous to the country, the rate of profits, and the value produced, will be the same. The advantage of any trade always resolves itself into that of an utility produced.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### BOUNTIES ON PRODUCTION.

WHILE the present artificial and restricted system of international commerce continues to be acted on by most nations, it may, under such peculiar circumstances, be proper to encourage the introduction of new manufactures, and the production of raw produce, particularly of corn, by a bounty, or by the imposition of duties on foreign productions which have a corresponding effect ; if so, the question to be considered in the case of a bounty is, how it can best be applied to effect the end in view in the most just, effectual, and economical manner ? If, on corn, a certain sum were paid per quarter, it would all go to the landholders in the form of rent, which would be unjust, because they could have no right to it ; and, as the price of corn would be, to a certain extent, lowered by the effect of the bounty and supply, the landholders would be gainers by its cheapness

in common with all other consumers. If, indeed, the community could afford it, and the landholders were to employ this additional revenue in productive labour, the nation would neither be richer nor poorer; if the additional produce were not derived from poorer soils, the national advantage obtained by the measure would be,—the having a greater supply of food of its own production, and being independent on foreign nations for one of the first necessities of life; but, from experience, we may safely conclude, that the landholders, as a body, would dissipate the addition made to their revenue by the bounty, in some unproductive mode or other, if not expend it on our foreign enemies by absenteeism; and, therefore, a bounty, to be paid in the above manner, would be disadvantageous as well as unjust.—The most proper and equitable mode would be to levy the amount of the bounty by a tax on rent, which tax would be repaid to the landholders by their tenants, who would receive it from the government in the shape of bounty, and by the extended cultivation and consequent improvement of their lands, they, the landholders, would ultimately gain an addition to their rent, which would much more than counterbalance the loss of interest on the amount of the tax, &c., while the nation at large

would be benefited by the increase of its productions, as already mentioned.\*

But, if a bounty were paid on the bringing waste lands into cultivation, reclaiming tracts of ground from the sea, draining lakes and marshes, clearing rocky land, or for any similar improvements of a like nature with the above, viz. adding to the cultivable surface of the country, the nation would gain more than the amount of the bounty, inasmuch as most or all agricultural improvements of the above description, when once made, are made for ever, and a productive capital securely and permanently invested for the national benefit.

\* Much confusion in the consideration of this subject has arisen from the artifice of the landholders, in falsely assuming, that their interest coincided with that of the farmer, and thereby, under the appellation of agricultural interest, persuading the rest of the nation that such was really the case. From which cause it has happened, that, although we know corn and most other principal products of agriculture to be annual productions, and, therefore, produced principally by circulating capital, which may be easily and quickly taken from, or applied to, the purposes of cultivation, yet we have been led to submit to legislative enactments of the most burdensome and fleecing description; proceeding on the supposition, that it must require many years to increase the production of corn, and, therefore, that we must provide for an independent supply long before it may be wanted. Now, on the contrary, if a prospect occurs of corn rising in price in any considerable degree, sufficient capital might and would

It may be, that a certain manufacture or occupation is established in a country not possessed of any greater, or even equal, natural advantages for carrying it on, than are possessed by the country which purchases the productions of that particular occupation; in such cases there can be no doubt of its being advantageous for the latter country, to endeavour, by means of a bounty, to establish the manufacture or occupation within itself; nor should such endeavours be relaxed, until the object has been accomplished; and when the manufacture or occupation has attained to maturity, the bounty may not only be withdrawn by degrees, but all that has been expended thereon will, ultimately, be amply repaid to the community in an increase of its capital, wealth, and population.

be employed on the land, the very first year, adequate to produce the required supply. By letting our poor and waste lands lay uncultivated, while the price of corn is too low to allow of their profitable cultivation, on individual account, we do not debar ourselves from having recourse to them when the price of corn rises so high as to make their cultivation advantageous; on the contrary, properly prepared new land frequently yields its best crop the first year. But our foreign enemies, who, while at peace, purchased our cloths, cottons, and hardwares, &c. with their corn, would find much more difficulty in supplying themselves with those necessary commodities, either at home or elsewhere; and clothing is, in Europe and North America, nearly as indispensable a necessary of life, or, at least, of comfortable existence, as corn.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### GROSS AND NET INCOME.

SINCE every labourer can produce a surplus, beyond his own wants, of some production or other, and as we have observed that the number of productive labourers that might be employed in a country like Britain are indefinite, it will follow, that both the gross and net income will be in proportion to the number of its productive labourers.

To an individual, possessing a capital of £20,000, and whose profits are £2,000 per ann., it may be a matter quite indifferent whether his capital employed a hundred or a thousand men; whether the commodities produced sold for £10,000 or £20,000, provided his profits are, in either case, undiminished. But the real interest of the nation at large may not, in this case, coincide with that of the individual. If, for the sake of argument, we admit the assumption, that the net income of the nation, public and private, could be the same with

a population of ten as with a population of twenty millions of people; still it would not be true that a man more *could not* be added to our navy or army, or a guinea, or its worth, to our disposable income in the latter case any more than in the former, and though the possible amount of taxes were more in the latter case than in the former; because, all men can, in a case of emergency, make extraordinary retrenchments (however small) in their ordinary expenditure, all which may be applied to the service of the State: and in proportion to their numbers must be the total amount of those exertions and contributions, until, at least, the Malthusian barrier be reached, when retrenchment and increase of productive labour are to become alike impossible.

Although it may admit of dispute, whether a given capital employed in agriculture does put in motion a greater quantity of productive labour than an equal capital employed in manufactures and trade; it is certain, that an equal quantity of labour is put in motion by an equal amount of capital, whether that capital be engaged in home or foreign trade; and, if left to itself, it will only be engaged in that which is the most profitable.

The only mode in which gross income can be advantageously reduced is, in reducing rent and wages by increased facility of raising corn,



and other raw produce, by the importation thereof, from wherever it can be brought into the home market at a lower rate. Suppose, that the gross income of the society be twenty millions, and its net income ten millions, of which the class of landholders receive five millions as rent; and that, by facility of production, or by the importation of corn, the necessary cost of that article was reduced one million—rent would fall one million, and the prices of the mass of commodities would also fall by the same amount: but the net revenue of the country would be just as great as before. Now, suppose two millions levied by taxation—would the society be richer or poorer? Richer, most certainly: for, after the payment of the taxes, they would have, as before, a net income of eight millions to bestow on the purchase of necessaries which had increased in quantity and fallen in price, &c., in the proportion of twenty to nineteen: not only, then, could the same taxation be endured, but even a greater, and yet the mass of the people be better provided with conveniences and necessaries than before; because, the net income of the country, that fund from which taxes are paid and enjoyments procured, would be much more adequate, than before, to maintain the actual population—to afford it enjoyments and necessaries—and to support any given amount of taxation.

That the stockholders are benefited by a fall in the value of corn, &c., cannot be doubted; but that is no reason why corn should be made or kept dear. If they are benefited more than others thereby, let the degree be ascertained, and a corresponding tax imposed upon them; but nothing can be more foolish than to shut out the vast advantages arising from cheapness of corn and abundance of productions, because the stockholders might have a greater share than others of the general gain.

As rent is the effect of a high price of corn, so loss of rent is the effect of a low price.—From the loss of rent, then, there will be a loss of nominal value, merely: but there will be a proportionate gain of wealth. The quantity of raw produce and other productions together, will be increased by the greater facility with which they are produced; they will be augmented in quantity and diminished in nominal value, which is what we should always endeavour to accomplish.

We have observed that the gross revenue will be in proportion to the number of the labouring population; it is desirable that both should be as large as possible. A country possessed of a large gross income and a numerous population, is proportionably unattackable by foreign enemies on her own soil; and it is not desirable that any nation should possess the means of

offence in too great abundance. Frederick II. of Prussia said, that, on coming to the throne, he found himself in possession of a great treasure and a fine army, and, therefore, he fell upon Silesia and seized it. Any one who will read the history of the last century may see what an enormous series of massacres and murders, robberies, burnings, and devastations of every description, were the consequences of that seizure. Statesmen are rather too apt to imitate Joab and Abner, and to say to each other, as Joab did, "Let the young men arise, and play before us."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### CURRENCY.

ALTHOUGH much has been written on this subject, yet of those who give their attention to such matters some, perhaps, are not fully acquainted with all its principles. We, therefore, propose to give a brief survey of the general laws which regulate its quantity and value.

Gold and silver are mere commodities, valuable only in proportion to the quantity of labour invested in them. Gold is, at present, about fifteen times dearer than silver, not because of the greater demand, but of the greater quantity of labour required for its production.

Gold and silver, like all other commodities, constitute capital, for they may be bartered with or against any other commodities; and we are aware, that all commodities are capital; the aggregate of commodities, and the aggregate of employable capital, are, therefore, convertible terms. Every sort of commodity

may be represented by, or bartered for, a certain quantity of any other commodity ; but gold and silver, when converted into the currency, are then only the representative of the employed capital, and its produced commodities, but not any part of it.

The quantity of currency that can be necessary in any country, must depend on the quantity of its commodities, and on that of those of the surrounding countries ; or, in other words, on the amount of its share of the employed capital. If gold be the currency, about one-fifteenth only of the quantity will be necessary ; which will be requisite, if it be of silver.

A circulation can only overflow, and be, in consequence, depreciated, when it is artificially increased without a corresponding increase in the quantity of commodities, or continued in the same abundance when commodities are diminished ; because, if both are reciprocally increased, no depreciation can take place in their relative values.

While the State coins money, and charges no seignorage, money will be of the same value as metal, of equal weight and fineness, provided coin be in sufficient quantity ; but, if the State charges a seignorage on the coinage greater than the labour expended in coining, its value will be depreciated to the full amount

of the quantity of productive labour required for the re-purchase, by the people, of the part so retained, in the first instance, by the State.\*

While the State coins, there can be no limit to the tax, but that of its power to prevent private or imported coinage; but there will not be any alteration caused thereby, in the intrinsic value of the money so issued, other than would be caused by a tax on money; the effects of which we have elsewhere stated.

Paper money circulates, or should circulate, on the principle of its being accounted the representative of real existing capital; it is, in fact, transferable mortgage bonds; and, if the holder can get real capital for them whenever he pleases, they will be equivalent to gold or silver, &c. of similar expressed value. Nor is it even necessary, that it should be limited to the amount of the coin or bullion in the country;† so long as it is the representative of real existing capital of any description, no-

\* See the effects of a seignorage tax, stated in Chap. xiii.

† If I want to invest a capital, consisting of houses, lands, or any other fixed property, and there be no other than a metallic currency, I can only accomplish it, by causing some other person to withdraw his capital from its employment, and turn it over to me; but, by means of a paper currency, I would accomplish my object, and employ my capital productively, without causing the withdrawing of any other capital from employment. I shall benefit myself

thing more is necessary to prevent it from depreciation; and we shall find, that, in certain cases, even the above-mentioned *proviso* is not an essential condition in the effecting such preservation.

We may be incorrect in assuming *à priori*, that a large issue of paper money is the cause of any depreciation which may occur in its value; before we can pronounce a just opinion thereupon, we must find whether it has been applied to the support of productive or unproductive labour.

If applied to support productive labour, there can be no assignable limit set to the amount of the paper money which may be issued without depreciation; and it follows, that those who contended, that the *mere* issue of bank notes by the Bank of England, unchecked by any power in the holders of such notes to demand either specie or bullion, had not, nor could not, have any permanent effect on the prices of commodities, bullion, or foreign exchange, were so far perfectly in the right.

If I received 10,000*l.* paper money from the Bank, merely on personal security, and if, with that paper money, I employ manufacturers,

and the country by the more active and productive employment of my capital, or by the difference between the amount of profits and that of my previous income.

agriculturists, or other productive labourers, I should, at the end of (say) a year, be possessed of 10,000% in commodities; that is to say, of real capital, together with profit. I should then exchange the commodities for the 10,000% of paper, which I return to the Bank; and, by its issue, I shall have gained for the Bank its discount, and a profit for myself, while the nation will have been enriched by the 10,000% worth of productions; and the currency must either be enhanced in value, or increased in quantity, for the purpose of circulating the increased amount of commodities. The same results would follow from the issue of ten or twelve millions of paper money, if similarly employed; and if, instead of mere personal security, the advance was made on real existing property, of equivalent value, neither the Bank nor the nation could be losers by the issue of the paper money, in case of failure in the speculation; since the Bank could sell the property, and receive back its paper money in payment from the purchasers.\* In what manner, then, (I would ask), can the issue of paper money, to be employed productively, produce

\* It is true, there would be a trifling depreciation while the commodities were being produced; but this effect would be gradually obviated, and entirely cease, at the period when the whole value had been produced in other commodities.



any detrimental or depreciating effect on the prices of commodities, bullion, or foreign exchanges? It may be objected, that a very great amount of circulating capital could not be productively employed; but we need not discuss that point; for we know, that, during the whole of the late period, while the Bank paper was depreciated, the market rate of interest was equal to, or above, the legal rate. Capital must, consequently, have been scarce, rather than plentiful; which, for the purpose of the present argument, is a sufficient answer to the above stated objection.

All the merchants, traders, manufacturers, or other persons, falling under the description of productive labourers, who received paper money from the Bank, must have employed it productively; they must have known, that they could convert it into real capital, with an increase in its value, equal to discount and profit, or they would not have wished to receive it. If they failed, the Bank would have had the real property on which the issue was made, and no other natural effects could have been produced by the foreclosure of that, than of any other species of mortgage. It is, therefore, clear, that the depreciation of the Bank paper did not, and could not, proceed from over issues, for the support of productive labour.

Let us now examine the effects which would follow from issuing Bank or State paper money, for the support of unproductive consumption, by unproductive labourers, spendthrifts, and prodigals, neither producing nor having real property to assign in lieu. Suppose, that I received 10,000*l.* paper money from the Bank, and that I therewith purchase commodities to be expended on myself, or in support of unproductive labourers; at the end of the year, the community would be impoverished by the 10,000*l.* worth of commodities consumed, and their currency depreciated in proportion to the amount which the portion required for circulating those commodities bears to the whole amount of the currency; and if, at the end of the year, the paper money were not withdrawn, but continued in the circulation, then the currency would be still further depreciated by the amount of that 10,000*l.* If I had power or authority to levy from the community 10,000*l.* worth of commodities, or real property, and to pledge the same to the Bank as their security, it would make no difference in the effect produced by employing unproductive labour.

The depreciation or elevation of the Bank paper currency then does not depend in the mere amount of its issues, but solely on its being employed in the support of unproductive and reproductive consumption.

On these principles, it will be seen, that it is not indispensable to the preservation of paper money from depreciation, that its quantity should be regulated by that of the metal which is declared to be the standard of the metallic coin, nor even that it should represent real property; but merely that it be employed in the support of reproductive consumption. To secure its being so employed, or intended to be so employed, the making it, in all cases, to represent real property of equivalent or greater value, would, probably, be the only effectual mode; and the only real property which can form a secure standard is bullion, being the universal medium.

Under a system of currency, regulated on the fore-stated principles, the Bank would never be liable to any serious embarrassments, even on those extraordinary occasions which spreads a general panic through a country.

The currency of a country will be in its most perfect state, when it consists wholly of paper money, the quantity and value of which to be regulated on principles which render unnecessary the keeping bullion or coin unproductively deposited, either in banks or mints, &c.—The use of paper, so regulated, instead of gold, substitutes the cheapest in place of the most expensive currency; enables the country, without any loss, to exchange all the gold or silver,

which it before used as currency, for raw materials, utensils, and food; by the use of which, its wealth and its enjoyments are increased, and power acquired to employ its whole capital in support of productive labour.

In a national point of view, it doubtless is desirable, that the State, rather than a bank, should issue this well-regulated paper money; because, the gain made thereby, being levied from the people, would be applicable to the service of the State, instead of going into the pockets of individuals.

But, it must be recollected, that, if the State were to issue paper money for the support of unproductive consumption, the evil effects resulting from artificial alterations of the currency would follow, in the same manner, as though a bank had done so, for the same purpose; and, if the government secure itself and its agents from the consequences of bankruptcy, (which it will in general be able to accomplish), then its power of issuing paper money will most certainly be abused,—at least, by every government which is not the real *bond fide* representative of the people.

It is a great fallacy to suppose, that any species of unproductive consumption, on the part of the State, will not be attended with a corresponding charge to the people. Suppose,

that a million of money should be required to fit out an expedition; if the State issued a million of paper, they would depreciate the currency to that amount, and such issue would be equivalent to a real tax levied on all the holders of the currency, and on all creditors; and, if the commodities purchased by the State with the paper money aforementioned were unproductively consumed, the currency would be still further depreciated, as already explained. It would be much more advantageous for the nation, because much more just and impartial to individuals, that the State should, by a general tax, levy the amount wanted in a direct mode, rather than by the indirect, deranging, and mischievous, measure of altering and depreciating the currency of the country. Similar effects would result, if, instead of issuing a million of paper money, in payment for the commodities wanted, the State should exchange the million of paper money, against a million of gold or silver coin, and send that abroad to purchase those commodities or supplies for the expedition; because, either the gold coin was necessary, or it was not; if necessary, the people must, as already shewn, re-purchase it, at considerable expense, since money cannot be exported and imported without great deductions, on account

of charges and profits; if unnecessary, it would not be found in the country, and the State could not get what did not exist.

Under a despotic or corrupt government, the power of issuing, or authorising the issuing, of paper money is, as already observed, sure to be abused. But, in a free country, having an enlightened legislature, truly elected by, and fairly representing, the people at large, the power of issuing paper money, under the requisite checks and regulations, might be safely lodged in the hands of Commissioners appointed for that special purpose, and made entirely independent of the executive part of the government, or person or persons filling or occupying that department of the State.

The greater or lesser quantity of the currency is of no material consequence; but it is of the utmost importance, that its quantity should be kept in a due ratio to the wealth of the country, and not capriciously altered at the will of the government, much less the will of private individuals, either singly or combined in companies. It should always be maintained at the determinate standard; and, since the metals, gold and silver, have been justly chosen by the universal consent of mankind to form the current representative of all other commodities, paper money should be made their faithful deputy representative, which can only be

done by placing it under the condition of being convertible into those metals, at the pleasure of the holders, if issued by private banks, or by regulating its quantity to that of other nations, by means of the foreign exchange, if issued by State Commissioners. The State, as already observed, ought to issue this money, and not permit any private banking whatever. In the government paper-money office a department should be formed to transact the business which is now done by private bankers. In every town of the empire, subordinate commissioners should be appointed to perform the business of banking and issuing the government paper; and thus the ruin so frequently brought upon the most prosperous and respectable individuals, by the failure of their bankers, would be entirely prevented, and the profits now made by private bankers be applied to the public service. The due limitation to the quantity of paper money could be easily effected, through an auxiliary registry office for foreign bills of exchange; whereby, the quantity of paper money could always be increased, or decreased, so as to keep the exchange at or about par.

An increasing circulation, from whatever cause it proceeds, will promote industry, and, consequently, national wealth; and if, of standard coin or undepreciated paper money, it

will shew, that the wealth of the country is proportionably increased, or increasing; but, if the currency has been artificially increased by (even an unavoidable) over issue of paper money, then the only just and politic mode of acting in such case, is to keep the same quantity of paper money in circulation, and let it gradually return to the standard of the country, with the gradual increase of population and wealth, which will be sure to take place in a state of freedom and consequent development of the natural resources of the country. The reduction of the amount of the currency, in any other mode, will be exceedingly pernicious to the national interest, through the distress it will inflict upon the most important portion of population,—the producers of national wealth. If these are in a prosperous state, the reduction of the landholders to the condition of day labourers, by the annihilation of rent, or its application to its just natural destination, instead of a national misfortune, would prove a national benefit of the most magnificent description.

An increase of currency must, of necessity; have place, only by degrees, in an extensive country; it cannot, and will not, be instantaneously amalgamated with the existing currency. Suppose one hundred individuals return from the East Indies in a year, bringing with



them 10,000*l.* each, to London, they will make a demand for labour; and it will not only rise, but be stimulated to greater exertion in London; but the London labourers, by getting an increased amount of money, will increase their demand for the productions of the rest of the country, and stimulate its producers, and so on to the extremities of the community; when, if the increase of currency be not required in the country, it will go to other nations in exchange for commodities. Exclusive of the stimulating effects of introducing an additional quantity of money, the mere introduction is of equivalent benefit to that of an equal amount of the most useful and necessary commodities. Looking at this cause and effect, in the reverse manner, will enable us to comprehend the evil effects which flow from permitting the revenue receivers, of any country, to absent themselves into other countries, and draw off the wealth of their own country thither after them.

From what has been stated, it appears probable, that Adam Smith was right in attributing superior advantages to the Scottish mode of affording bank accommodations to trade, &c. over those afforded by the English mode. By the former, credit may be converted into real capital; by the latter, real existing trans-

ferable property alone can, generally speaking, be made available.

The relative intrinsic value of gold and silver currency may be very different from their relative current value as coins, but such differences are all explicable on the common principles of supply and demand.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### INFLUENCE OF DEMAND AND SUPPLY ON PRICES.

WE are now aware, that it is the cost of production which must ultimately regulate the price of commodities, and not the proportion between the supply and demand, (although it has been so often asserted); that may, indeed, for a time, affect the market value of a commodity, until it is supplied in greater or less abundance, according as the demand may have increased or diminished; but this effect will be only of temporary duration.

Diminish the cost of production of hats, and their price will ultimately fall to their new natural price, although the demand should be doubled, trebled, or quadrupled. Diminish the cost of subsistence of men, by diminishing the natural price of food and necessities of life, and wages will ultimately fall, notwithstanding that the demand for labour may very greatly increase.

The demand for any commodity cannot be said to increase, if no additional quantity of it be purchased or consumed; and yet, under such circumstances, its money value may rise, for its money cost of production would be really altered, by an altered value of money; and, without any increase of demand, the price of the commodity would be naturally adjusted to that new value.

The cost of production determines the lowest price to which things can fall; the price below which they cannot remain for any length of time, because production would then be either entirely stopped or greatly diminished.

Were any commodity, or substance, whatever, possessed of fixed and intrinsic value, so as to constitute a certain standard, under any circumstances, then every other commodity would be subject to a variation in exchangeable value, from four different circumstances:—

1st. It would be subject to an increase of its value, from a diminution of its quantity.

2nd. To a diminution of its value, from an augmentation of its quantity.

3rd. It might be augmented in value by an increased demand.

4th. Its value might be diminished by a reduced demand.

But, since no commodity can possess fixed and intrinsic value in exchange, and although

mankind have selected for a practical measure of value the commodity least liable to these four causes of variation, yet, in consequence of such liability, all commodities are subjected to four more variations in their value, viz.—from the same four causes of variation operating on the commodity we have adopted as a measure of value.

Commodities which are monopolized will not always vary according to these causes of variation, because their price has no necessary connection with their natural value; but the prices of all commodities which are open to free competition, and whose quantity may be increased in any moderate degree, will ultimately depend, not on the state of demand and supply, but on the cost of their production.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### ON MACHINERY.

**THE** effects produced by the employment of new or improved machinery, on the interests of the different classes of society, is a subject of great importance, and its exposition is especially necessary as a preliminary step to our approaching examination of Professor Malthus's work, concerning Population and the English Poor Laws.

The saving of labour, by the application of machinery to any branch of production, will, doubtless, ultimately become a general good; but its operation, at first, even for some length of time, may be very injurious to particular classes of society. The class of landholders, together with all who have fixed incomes, will be immediately and permanently benefited by the reduction in the prices of commodities, on which rent, tithes, dividends, salaries, annuities, pensions, &c. &c. are expended; all other capitalists will ultimately be benefited in the same

manner, but will be subject, at first, to that portion of loss or inconvenience attendant on the removal of capital from one employment to another. . The class of labourers may, however, have their interests deeply injured, by the substitution of machinery for human labour; and, since all capital is (abstractedly considered) a contribution furnished by the labourers for the general benefit, it is desirable, equally on the principles of justice as of true policy, to obviate the evil effects which result to the contributors from any particular mode of employing it. Since the employment of machinery is, by all, acknowledged to be a national benefit, it is both just and politic, that the nation should employ and support the labourers which are thrown out of employment by the introduction of machinery, until individual capitalists require their labour; and, also, that the nation should pay the expenses consequent on the labourer's removal to any other part of the country, where he may again be employed by private capital. Shall the nation grant and pay compensation to any and every individual of those styled middle and upper ranks,\* for any real or possible injury

\* Middle and idle ranks would be the more appropriate title; and we should then always recollect the old proverb, which says, "Satan still finds some mischief for idle hands to do."

which they may sustain from the operations of measures calculated for the general good?— Shall even shameful sinecures entitle their holders to require compensation for *their* being *abolished*; and shall the poor labourer, whose self and family are reduced to starvation, by the introduction of a national benefit, be denied temporary assistance, and be hanged, or else transported to the farther side of the globe, or to those other seminaries of congregated vice and wretchedness, known under the names of jails, mills, hulks, &c. if he attempt to obtain redress by the only means in his power, viz. the destruction of the immediate cause of his deprivations?—Are such proceedings consonant with impartial justice, and the profession of the purest form of Christianity?

We proceed to prove, how the interests of the labouring classes are injured by the introduction of new and improved machinery in the place of human labour. Suppose, that a capitalist employs 20,000*l.* capital in carrying on the business of a farmer and a manufacturer of necessaries, and that 7,000*l.* of the above capital is fixed in buildings, implements, &c. &c. 13,000*l.* is then circulating capital, employed in the support of human labour. If profits are—say 10 per cent., the 20,000*l.* of capital is every year put into its original state of efficiency, and yields a profit of 2,000*l.*



Each year, the capitalist begins his operations, by having food and necessaries in his possession to the value of 13,000*l.*, all of which he sells in the course of the year to his own workmen for that sum of money, and, during the same period, he pays them the like amount of money as wages; at the end of the year, they replace in his possession food and necessaries of the value of 15,000*l.*, 2,000*l.* of which he consumes himself, or for his own pleasure or gratification; the gross produce, however, is, for that year, 15,000*l.*, and the net produce is 2,000*l.* Suppose now, that, during the following year, the capitalist employs half his men in constructing a machine, and the other half in the production of food and necessaries as before, during that year, he would pay the sum of 13,000*l.* in wages, as before, and would sell food and necessaries to the same amount to his workmen; but how would the case be the following year?

While the machine was being made, only one half of the usual quantity of food and necessaries would be obtained, and they would be only one half the value of the quantity which was produced before. The machine would be worth 7,500*l.*, and, therefore, the capital of the capitalist would be as great as before; for he would have, besides these two values, his former fixed capital of 7,000*l.*, making, in

the whole, 20,000*l.* capital, and 2,000*l.* profits. After deducting this latter sum for his own expenses, as before, he would then have a no greater circulating capital than 5,500*l.*, with which to carry on his subsequent operations; and, therefore, his means of employing labour would be reduced in the proportion of 13,000*l.* to 5,500*l.*, and, consequently, all the labour which was before employed by 7,500*l.* would become redundant.

The reduced quantity of labour which the capitalist can employ, must, indeed, with the assistance of the machine, and after the proper deductions for keeping it in repair, produce a value equal to 7,500*l.*; it must replace the circulating capital, with a profit of 2,000*l.* on the whole capital; but, if this be done, if the net income be not diminished, of what importance is it to the capitalist, whether the gross income be of the value of 3,000*l.*, of 10,000*l.*, or of 15,000*l.*?

In this case, then, although the net produce will be undiminished in value, and although its power of purchasing commodities may be greatly increased, the gross amount will have been reduced by a value of 7,500*l.*; and, as the power of supporting a population, and employing labour, depends always on the gross produce of a nation, and not on its net produce, there will necessarily be a diminution, to

the same amount in the demand for labour, whereby population will be rendered redundant, and the labourers be reduced to a situation of distress and poverty which they could not avert by any means, or by any exertion of foresight or prudence on their part.

As, however, the power of saving from revenue, to add to capital, must mainly depend on the efficiency of the net revenue to satisfy the wants of the capitalist, it could not fail to follow, from the reduction in the price of commodities consequent on the introduction of machinery, that, with the same wants, he would have increased means of saving, increased facility of transforming revenue into capital; with every increase of capital, he would employ more labourers; and, doubtless, a portion of the people who were previously thrown out of work; or the whole, or even a much greater number, might be subsequently employed; since, if the increase of production was so great as to afford a net produce, in food and necessaries, equal to or greater than the previous gross produce, there would be the same or greater ability to employ the whole population as before, when there would be no longer any redundancy of population. The only point to be attended to is, to support the labourers by some means or other in the meanwhile; and of the justice of measures calculated to effect that object,

there can be but one opinion among honest men. His worship the squire, or his grace the duke, would not be reduced to starvation, if, for the national benefit, a strip of land, held by the former, should be occupied by a highway or canal, &c., or, if an English rock claimed by the latter, should be broken up to form a breakwater, at an important naval port; but what is to become of the labourers, whose total incomes are annihilated by the introduction of machinery, which may be a more unequivocal national benefit than some of the above undertakings? Are the former individuals to be fully compensated, because they belong to the idle classes, and the latter to starve, because they belong to the labouring class; and even to be insulted in their misery, by shameless priests publicly affirming, that it is their own faults? &c. &c.\*

The case which we have supposed, is the simplest which could be selected; but it would make no difference in the result, if we supposed that the machinery was applied to the trade of any other capitalist.

\* The Duke of Bedford received £10,000 for granting permission to the citizens of the united kingdom, to break up a rock of their own country, to form the Breakwater, at the national port of Plymouth Sound!!!

*Vide* the several publications on this subject, by the Parson-Professor Malthus, and his disciples.

It follows, therefore,—

1. That the discovery and useful application of machinery always leads to an increase of the net produce of a country, although it may not, and will not, after an inconsiderable interval, increase the value of the net produce.

2. That an increase of the net produce of a country is compatible with a diminution of the gross produce, and that the motives for employing machinery are always sufficient to ensure its employment, if it will increase the net produce, although it may, and at first, almost always will, diminish the gross produce and value.

3. That the opinion entertained by the labouring classes, that the employment of machinery is frequently detrimental to their immediate interests, is not founded on prejudice and error, but is conformable to the correct principles of political economy.

4. That the introduction, use, and improvement of machinery is incontrovertibly a national benefit; and, therefore, the nation is bound to afford a fair and just compensation to those individuals who are injured by such introduction.

5. That if the improved means of production, in consequence of the use of machinery, should increase the net produce of a country in a degree so great, that no diminution should take

place in the quantity of the gross produce, then the situation of all classes will be improved. The landholder and capitalist will be benefited, not by increase of revenue and profits, but by the reduced value of the commodities on which revenue and profits are expended. The labouring class will also be benefited, by,—first, the stimulus to savings from income arising from the abundance of the net produce; secondly; from the low price of many articles of consumption, on which their wages will be expended; and, thirdly, from greater numbers being employed as domestic servants.

Independently of the discovery and introduction of machinery, to which our attention has just been directed, the labouring class have no small interest in the manner, in which the net income of the country is expended, even although it should in all cases be expended merely for the gratification or enjoyments of those who primarily receive it.

If a landholder or capitalist expended his revenue or income, in the manner, of an ancient baron, in the support of domestic servants and retainers, he will give employment to many more persons than if he expended it on fine clothes, costly furniture, carriages, horses, or in the purchase of any other luxuries. By revenue or income of 10,000*l.*, the same quantity of labour might, indeed, be employed, whether

it were expended on fine clothes, &c., or in a quantity of food and clothing of the same value : if expended in the first mode, no future labour could be consequently employed ; but, if expended in acquiring a quantity of food and necessaries of life, all those who could be employed thereby would be added to the former demand for labourers, and, of course, would provide for a permanent natural increase of the population. As the labourers, then, are deeply and justly interested, not only in the demand for labour but in the mode in which their labour is employed ; they must naturally desire, that as much of the net revenue of the country as possible should be diverted from expenditure on luxuries and follies, &c., to be expended in the support of productive labourers ; and, more particularly, that it should not be carried out of the country by absentees, and expended for the benefit of foreigners and national enemies.

In the same manner, a country engaged in war, under the necessity of maintaining large fleets and armies, employs a great many more men than will be employed when the war terminates, and its annual expenditure ceases. If I were not called upon to pay a tax of 500%. annually, during the war, and which is expended on men in the situations of soldiers, sailors, &c. &c., I might probably expend it on

furniture, clothes, books, &c. &c. ; and, whether employed in the one way or in the other, there might not be more labour employed in production ; for the food and clothing of the persons employed in and about the war might require the same amount of labour to produce it, as to produce those other commodities, luxuries, enjoyments, &c. But, if a war be supported by expending the capital of the country thereon,\* population will be incited to increase ; but the capital which should have been employed productively, and which, if so employed, would have provided for the permanent support of the population, has, meanwhile, been consumed ; and when the war ends, the population incited into existence becomes redundant, or, in other words, there is no existing capital to furnish the means of employment to it ; and what aggravates the evil of carrying on the war by means of loans, rather than by taxes raised at the time, is, that a large share of the income arising from the remaining capital of the country, will be devoted to the providing a revenue for the owners of the titles to the consumed capital, instead of being employed in the support of its own capitalists ; and their capitals will, of course, be reduced by the whole amount of the interest of the government debt,

\* A war is supported out of the capital of a country exactly to the amount of the debt incurred during its prosecution.



less by the proportion paid by the holders of fixed revenue or incomes; while, from the effects of competition, among the increased number of labourers, for the employment which can be furnished by a reduced and burdened capital, wages will fall excessively low, and the aggregate effects of all these causes will be perceived in the deteriorated condition of the labouring classes.

An eligible mode of obviating, in some degree, the evils above mentioned, would, perhaps, consist in not at once discharging the people who had been employed during the war, but gradually; and, in the meanwhile, employing them in the construction of national works, such as harbours, canals, roads, bridges, &c.; and in the cultivation of the waste lands, (which waste lands, and lands reclaimable from the sea, lakes, fens, rocks, &c., ought to be appropriated to that purpose, on account of the nation at large.) By proceeding thus, a great addition would be made to the productive capital of the country, and, in a few years, its total existing capital would bear a much greater proportion to the total charges thereon, whereby profits and wages would improve in a corresponding degree, and, in the meantime, new openings for advantageous employment and trade would be found, and the nation, thereby, gradually relieved of a part of the burdens laid

on them during the war; at all events, it is the duty of every tolerably good or well-ordered government to do every thing which can possibly tend to alleviate the distress consequent on its own acts. But a government which, after forcing its subjects to serve in its wars for less than one-half of the just wages of their labour, should immediately, at its conclusion, turn those people adrift to starve, and cause others to starve, would not deserve the name of a government, but, rather, that of a vile and cruel tyranny, to which the people so treated would be the veriest slaves.

The employment of horses, in lieu of human labour, has the same effect as any other machinery, and, in fact, may be correctly named animal machinery; and, if the cost of its support be less than that of men, it will be substituted, and a corresponding number of labourers be thrown out of employment; and, unless the income obtained by the substitution be so much increased as to afford a surplus sufficient to employ the disemployed labour, it would become redundant, and be attended with all the other distressing consequences which we have already stated.

There is little doubt, but that a natural increase of capital and population would occasion a rise in the price of food, and the raw produce of the country; but, with a free trade,

it would not rise even in an equal degree, as we have elsewhere repeatedly observed ; and, therefore, the consideration of its ultimate limit, and the policy then to be observed, may safely be deferred, not only for the present, but until the tropical regions of America, Africa, and Asia, approach the limit of possible production of rice, cotton, sugar, &c. &c. ; nor until the vast country of North and South Africa, Middle and Northern Asia, North and South America, &c., are in a similar state as to the production of wheat and other corn, animal food, &c.

Nevertheless, the wilful destruction of capital, in the supremely wicked employment of war, is the very opposite mode to that which might obviate vice, misery, redundant population, and its attendant evils, even though those evils really proceeded from the principle of population.

In America, and other countries similarly circumstanced, where the food of man is easily provided, there may, notwithstanding, be abundant, and even extraordinary, incitements to the introduction and employment of machinery, from capital increasing faster than population, and the consequent high price of labour. In America, this is actually the fact ; for the money-wages of almost every kind of human labour is, and has long been, higher there than

in England, although food be not more than, perhaps, one-fifth or one-eighth of the money-price of food in England; but difficulties attendant on the first introduction of machinery into any country are so great, and so expensive, that any country which has got the start of others in this respect, may, if her natural advantages be at least equal to theirs, and her taxation not greater, maintain her pre-eminence; because machinery is susceptible of almost unlimited improvement and extension; and, therefore, while other countries copy, she may and will improve and extend its use. Were it not, that Great Britain possesses vast natural advantages in a most salubrious climate; a fertile soil; rich mines of coal, iron, lead, tin, copper, &c. &c.; a vast range of sea-coast, containing numerous good harbours; and an industrious and enterprising population; and, that the majority of her labouring population have been protected from the evil effects of that fluctuation, incidental to manufacturing employments, by the politic provision of the English poor laws—were she not possessed of those natural and artificial advantages, her machinery, and its productions, could never have reached to its present degree of perfection; or if, by means of extraordinary encouragement, it had ever become considerable, her foolish continental wars, and enormous

taxation, would soon have reduced it to insignificance.

The employment of machinery cannot be safely discouraged in any country, because, if capital is not allowed to get the greatest net income, which the use of machinery can afford, it will be carried to other countries, which must cause a much more serious diminution in the demand for labour than the most extensive use of machinery; for, while a capital is employed in a country, it must demand some labour: machinery must be made, repaired, and worked by men. By investing part of a capital in improved machinery, the diminution in the demand for labour will be only temporary; whereas, by the exportation of capital, the demand which it would have made, will be for ever annihilated.

By employing new or improved machinery in the production of commodities, their prices are reduced; consequently, they can be sold in other countries at a cheaper rate. If, however, we were to reject the use of machinery, while all other countries encouraged it, we would be obliged, in our exchanges with those countries, to receive a commodity which cost them but one day's labour, in exchange for that which, perhaps, cost us two or three days' labour, and this disadvantageous exchange would be the consequence of our own act; for the com-

modity which we export, and which cost us two days' labour, would have cost us only one, if we had not rejected the use of machinery, the services of which our neighbours had more wisely accepted and appropriated. The introduction of new and improved machinery should, therefore, be encouraged as much as possible ; and the labourers who are temporarily thrown out of employment thereby, should be supported at the public expense, by being employed on public works (at a rate of wages a grade lower than in similar private works) until they be again required by private capitalists.



**PRINCIPLES OF POPULATION,**  
**&c.**





# PRINCIPLES OF POPULATION,

§c.

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## PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

HAVING thus briefly stated the principles of Political Economy, or rules which should govern the internal and external conduct of a well regulated national, family, in the pursuit of acquiring the largest possible quantity of subsistence and comforts by honest industry and its free exertion ; which is, at once, the safest and the most productive mode of acquiring it ; we proceed to investigate the principles which should govern the conduct of such a community in the increase of their numbers, and the due distribution of their means of subsistence and comfort.

This is a subject on which a celebrated work has been written by Professor Malthus, which, although it appears to us founded on error and misrepresentation, has obtained unlimited credence among the interested—the unthinking—the uninquisitive—and the imitative thinkers and reasoners. We, therefore, conclude, that

the most effectual mode of investigating and stating those principles, which should regulate our conduct on this subject, will be that of an examination of the aforesaid work, which bears the following remarkable title—"An Essay on the Principle of Population; or, a View of its past and present Effects on Human Happiness; with an Inquiry into our Prospects respecting the future Removal or Mitigation of the Evils which it occasions.—By T. R. Malthus, A.M., late Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, and Professor of History and Political Economy, in the East India College, Hertfordshire."—5th Edition, 3 vols., 1517 pages.

We are the more induced to adopt this mode of investigating and stating the principles of population, in consequence of the Edinburgh "feelosofers" having declared to Mr. Cobbett, in the course of their "booing" to him over his "Cottage Economy," that Mr. Malthus is a "great and good man," and expressed their earnest desire that Mr. Cobbett would cease to expose and ridicule their tutor in political economy, on their simple assurance that their tutor's principles are not so different from those of the Political Registrar as the latter has hitherto supposed. An M. D. Historian of a certain country has also taken occasion to state in his work, that Mr. Malthus is an "ingenious philosopher," &c.; and similar opinions appear to

have been held by a large portion of the "collective wisdom," when the late notorious marriage act was passed, and Scarlet and Co's. bills were introduced and discussed, &c. &c. We cannot, therefore, doubt, that, in our examination of the "Essay," &c. we shall find numerous and brilliant specimens of the "greatness, goodness, and ingenious philosophy" possessed by the very learned author, and which specimens we will not fail to exhibit in the strongest light which our common-sense lamp will afford. We also hope to elicit something satisfactory on the subject of population, something which (to borrow Mr. Malthus's elegant simile) will, at least, indicate the most effectual modes whereby a grazier (or government and higher classes) can most certainly stock a farm (or country) with the greatest number of well conditioned cattle (or labouring population).

It is not our business to know any thing of Mr. M. beyond what his book may make manifest for all : besides, "the annals of philosophy," will, doubtless, place upon record his ingenious discoveries in that department. His "greatness" will be advantageous to his country of course, while his "goodness" will be for himself and his pupils.—Of his unpublished sentiments or conduct, we are neither able nor willing to take cognizance.

## CHAPTER I.

### OBSERVATIONS ON THE PREFACES TO THE ESSAY ON THE PRINCIPLE OF POPULATION, &c.

WITH the view of avoiding the giving cause for charging us with misrepresenting Mr. Malthus's sentiments and reasonings, we shall make as much use of his own arrangements of words as possible, and if there be any of those capable of two or more meanings, which is, as we understand, not at all an uncommon occurrence in his writings,\* we may, perchance, adopt the wrong one, in which case we hope he will point out the mistake as soon as he may find it convenient.

In the first part of this preface, or that to the second edition of the essay, &c., Mr. M. says that he "had discovered the principle which formed the main argument of his first essay, by deduction from the writings of Hume, Wallace, Adam Smith, and Dr. Price,† and that his ob-

\* See Ricardo's Principles, &c. c. xxxii. notes to p. 504 & 511.

† It would have been kind in Mr. Malthus to have specified the particular passages in the writings of those men, wherein they had supported the doctrine, that "vice and misery are the past and present effects of the principle of population."

ject was to apply this principle to try the truth of those speculations on the possible perfectibility of man and society, which, at that time, excited a considerable share of the public attention."

In pursuance of this object, he says that the principle discovered as above mentioned, "appeared to him to account for much of that poverty and misery observable among the lower classes of people in every nation, and for the reiterated failures in the efforts of the higher classes to relieve them;" wherefore, the said appearances induced him to set to work and inquire into the operation of the principle which he thus (imagined he) had discovered.

"In the course of this inquiry, he found that so much had been done by others as to create a natural surprise, that it had not engaged more of the public attention;" but, "much, however, remained yet to be done, independently of the comparison between the increase of population and food, which had not been stated with sufficient force and precision; some of the most curious and interesting parts of the subject had been either wholly omitted or treated very slightly. Though it had been stated distinctly that population must always be kept down to the level of the means of subsistence, yet few inquiries had been made into the various modes by which this level is effected, and the principle had never been sufficiently pursued to its

consequences, nor had those practical inferences drawn from it, which a strict examination of its effects on society appears to suggest.”—We are also informed, that in the second edition, “the action of another check to population besides vice and misery has been supposed;” but that “to those who still think that any (positive) check to population, whatever, would be worse than the evils which it would relieve, the conclusions of the first essay will remain in full force, and, if we adopt this opinion, we shall be compelled to acknowledge that the poverty and misery which prevail among the lower classes of society are absolutely irremediable.”

It is next stated, that “all possible pains have been used to avoid any errors in the facts and calculations which have been produced in the course of the work;” and that “should any of them, nevertheless, turn out to be false, the reader will see that they will not materially affect the general scope of the reasoning!”

In the preface to this fifth edition, we are still further informed, that “this Essay was first published at a period of extensive warfare, combined, from peculiar circumstances, with a most prosperous foreign commerce,” and that it came before the public, therefore, at a time when there would be an extraordinary demand for men, and very little disposition to suppose the possibility of any evil arising from the redundancy

of population. Its success, under these disadvantages, was greater than could have been reasonably expected ; and it may be presumed, that it will not lose its interest after a period of a different description has succeeded, which has, in the most marked manner, illustrated its principles and confirmed its conclusions !”

On the foregoing we have to remark, that if the operations, or “past and present effects,” which are pretended to be produced by Mr. M.’s new discovered principle, should, on further investigation, be traced to a very different principle or cause, we should presume, that such a result would “materially affect the general scope of the reasoning” contained in a work proceeding on, and assuming, the correctness of that pretension. How far such may be the case, will be seen in the course of this examination, when we think it will appear that the poverty and misery existing among the labouring classes, may be otherwise accounted for than by the inevitable operation of the principle of population, or, in other words, the power of procreation with which mankind are endowed.

As for “the reiterated failures in the efforts of the higher classes (in other words, idle sporting classes) to relieve them,” we can only say, that, although we are perfect-



ly acquainted with the many and successful efforts of the same idle and sporting classes to burden the labourers to the utmost limit of their power to bear those burdens, yet we are so ignorant of those efforts having been made, of which Mr. M. speaks, that it would have been highly desirable he should have stated a few instances, not insulated attempts (because we would not despair of, sometimes, finding a good man even in Newgate), but efforts generally, cordially, and honestly, so intended. Till we acquire this information we must postpone this part of the subject, since the only effort of the sort, with which we are acquainted, is the English poor laws; but Mr. M. will not allow that they have benefited those for whom they are intended.

As to his surprise, that it had not engaged more of the public attention, we must take leave to tell him, that common-sense folks are not likely to feel much interest in the assertion, that two and two make four, nor even that one and one make six or eight: although the ingenious philosopher may have supposed that he made an unheard-of discovery, when he had proved that mankind might multiply faster where food and necessaries were abundant than where they were scarce, yet, to common minds, no doubt of its possibility ever occurred. Respecting the great things which remained to be accom-

plished by Mr. M., we think that his pretended discovery of an arithmetical and geometrical ratio, between the increase of food and population, is sheer nonsense, if insisted on, either as approximating to a true statement of those ratios, or as leading to any useful practical result, and that vice and misery are "the past and present effects of the principle of population," requires to be proved. If we are wrong in this opinion, we shall doubtless find out, in the course of this examination, how it happens that the means of subsistence, which are produced by population, must increase in an arithmetical ratio, while (population itself) the cause of production must increase in a geometrical ratio; which, when so found, will doubtless be one of "the curious and interesting parts of the subject." We think, that, after stating the trite truism, that population must and is always kept equal to, or beneath the level of, the means of subsistence, that then the most interesting inquiry was not solely.—How is population kept down to the actual level? but—What are the causes which, in any and every country, have kept it, and do still keep it, below the possible height of that level? The various modes by which population is kept down to an actual level of any given degree of depression, below the possible height attainable in any particular country, is, no doubt,

necessary to be known ; but they are to be considered as effects only,—and the causes must be traced ere we pretend to assign any one in particular, and proceed to fasten a chain of reasoning thereto ere we have proved it.

Respecting the dilemma into which Mr. M. supposes that he has placed us, in case we do “ believe, that any *positive* check to population would be worse than the evils which it would relieve,” we can only say, at present, that we hope to extricate ourselves, in the courses of this examination, without being “ compelled to acknowledge that ” the whole of “ the poverty and misery which prevail among the labouring classes are *absolutely* irremediable.”

The facts and calculations produced in the Essay may, indeed, be free from error ; but if these facts should prove to be merely a muster roll of foreigners, any calculation made on their support must be unfounded.

If those facts do not admit of the inferences which Mr. M. pretends to have drawn from them, will not that defect be fatal to the general scope of the reasoning ?

It is certainly an ingenious specimen of philosophical logic to assert, that *any* of the facts or calculations produced in support of a case may turn out to be false, and the case continue as well supported as though all were found true

and correct. In this particular case, however, we believe it will be found to be as is asserted, for we begin to doubt that it will turn out, on trial, to be incapable of any support whatever. Of the period when the Essay was first published, we only know, that, by means of borrowing, and the unchecked issue of paper money to be employed unproductively, a large portion of the national capital was being consumed in the employment of unproductive labour, which must have excited an extra increase of population, which, when the borrowing and expending ceased, could have no corresponding capital for its employment; and we should deem, that, if Mr. M. could plume himself on having pointed out the evil effects which would inevitably follow such proceedings, and on the having proposed and induced the adoption of measures calculated to obviate the impending misery and mischief, he would have had more just cause of exultation on the success of his book, which, in point of quantity of sale, is a very uncertain criterion of real worth or usefulness. The vicious man will always regard most favourably the false prophet who quiets his conscience, by crying—peace, peace! although there may really be no peace. To tell the fashionable idlers and sportsmen, that it is equally or, rather, more meritorious to keep a race horse than to support half a dozen

of human families, will not fail to ensure popularity,—if not of the most worthy, yet of the most valuable description for a State Parson. That we had a most prosperous foreign commerce at the aforesaid period, as compared with the present, is a result obtained, not from the public documents, but from Mr. Malthus's own ingenious brain. He next asserts, that, at the said time of his first publication, “very little disposition existed, to suppose the possibility of any evil arising from the redundancy of population.” To this we must reply, by assuring him, that whatever his philosophical brotherhood may have supposed, the labouring community never doubted, that the turning adrift upon them all the persons employed by the government on account of the war,—at the very moment, too, when national home expenditure ceased and taxation was increased,—would essentially reduce the price of labour, and the means of its employment; and, consequently, produce the distress and misery which have actually taken place among us. Whether the period between 1814 and 1817 has illustrated the assumed principles of the Essay, and confirmed its conclusions, will be seen in the course of the examination to which we are proceeding. We perfectly agree in Mr. M.'s statement of the subject, book 1, chap. i.—“In an inquiry concerning the improvement of society,

the mode of conducting the subject, which naturally presents itself, is—

“1st. To investigate the causes that have hitherto impeded the progress of mankind towards happiness; and—

“2dly. To examine the probability of the total or partial removal of these causes in future.”

Certainly, no inquiry concerning temporal objects can be more interesting to mankind than the investigation proposed, but we cannot quite so readily admit of the assumption, that “the power of increase, implanted in all animated life, is the one great cause of human unhappiness.” That “there is no bound to the prolific nature of plants or animals, but what is made by their crowding and interfering with each other’s means of subsistence, is a great truth,” and shews the wisdom of the universal Creator; since, had it been otherwise, much, if not all this earth, must long since have become a desolate wilderness; but the observation has very little relevancy to the subject of our inquiry. Mankind are differently constituted from all other terrestrial animals: we have reason,\* and can act according to its dictates, while all

\* We do not mean to deny the existence of reason in animals; but it is evident, that there is a wide difference between our capacities of using it, and of theirs, which is all at present necessary for our purpose.

the others are irrational; it is, therefore, evident, that we cannot argue analogically in this case. Mr. M. does, indeed, propose to deduce proof, from “a review of the different states of society in which man has existed,” that the power of procreation is the sole—or, at least, the principal cause of all the vice and misery to be found in the world; we shall, therefore, accompany him to this review, and carefully report our observations. We do not see any necessity for previously endeavouring to ascertain, what would be the natural increase of population, if the power of procreation were left to exert itself with perfect freedom, while food and necessaries were also abundant; we grant, that it would increase the numbers of mankind with an uncommon rapidity, and Mr. M. is welcome to make as much of the grant as he possibly can; although we much doubt the correctness of the assertions respecting the increase of population in North America; yet, as it does not appear to be of importance to the subject of the inquiry, we think it unnecessary to examine the point more minutely. We see abundant cause of thanksgiving to the great Creator of mankind for the power he has given to them, of converting the wilderness of the earth into cultivated fields and abodes of happiness. If they suffer a few individuals of their own species to act the

tiger in the field, or the dog in the manger, it is their own fault, not that of the Deity.

Europeans, in general, do not possess sufficient knowledge, either of "China or Japan," to warrant their quotation of any points respecting the situation and circumstances of those countries, in proof of any part of the subject into which we are inquiring.—"Colonization" does not *necessarily* produce the "extermination" of the prior inhabitants, although such effects may, in some cases, result from it; and, if no violence is practised towards them, it is rather consolatory than otherwise to the lover of his species, that a race of miserable bloody savages should, partly by dying off, and partly by incorporation with the colonists, become extinguished, and be replaced by civilized men.

Dismissing the whole of the absurd dissertations about the arithmetical and geometrical ratios of the increase of food and population, as being, for the reasons already mentioned, inapplicable to the case, we pass on to—



## CHAPTER II.

### “ OF THE GENERAL CHECKS TO POPULATION, AND THE MODE OF THEIR OPERATION.”

THAT the want of food is the ultimate check to population, is a trite truism ; but the assertion, that this is never the immediate check, except in cases of actual famine, is incorrect, —because, the knowledge, that food is necessary to the sustenance of man, is possessed by all men ; and to insinuate, that the high-minded population of England are of such lascivious and unfeeling dispositions, as to indulge the sexual passion, at the expense of their independence, and with the certain prospects of themselves and offspring inhabiting the workhouses, is, in our opinion, a much nearer approximation to lying calumny than to truth. —With “a state of equality,” we have, at present, nothing to do,—if, by that term, a community of wives and goods be meant ; all that will be required by people of common sense, being an equality of rights, and abolition of

privileges, at least, of all not absolutely necessary to the well being of the State.

Respecting the questions proposed for the consideration of a man about to marry,—“Does he even feel secure, that, should he have a large family, his utmost exertions can save them from rags and squalid poverty, and their consequent degradation in the community?—And may he not be reduced to the grating necessity of forfeiting his independence, and of being obliged to the sparing hand of charity for support?” We would fain know the man who would dare to answer the first question in the affirmative, or the latter in the negative. Has Mr. M. not seen, has he not heard, of great church dignitaries and nobility,—yea, a whole royal family, reduced to depend on *foreign* charity for support; and the heir-apparent of a vast despotic monarchy bound apprentice to a cobbler, and probably starved and whipt to death? As to the production of private vice, we much doubt, that if the religion, of which Mr. M. is professedly an ordained priest, does not furnish an antidote, it will not be found in the *Essay on Population*, even though a fourth and a fifth volume of sermons on moral restraint, and the Hertford College lectures, also, should be added to the next edition.—Regarding “those unfortunate females, with whom all great towns abound,” we are of opi-

nion, that by far the greater number have been reduced to that pitiful condition, in consequence of the inadequate protection afforded to the female sex, by the legislation of a *soi-disant* Christian country:—while the most frightful laws have been enacted against the poachers of hares, &c. or breakers of pheasants' eggs, none, in any degree equal to meet the enormity of the crime, have been passed against the unprincipled seducer of female virtue.

We supposed, that we were setting out directly “to investigate the causes which have hitherto impeded the progress of mankind towards happiness,” and to review the proofs, that the power of procreation is the cause; but we find, that we must first listen to a lecture on checks,—among which, however, we do not recognize ignorance and misgovernment, which we strongly suspect to be the root and trunk of the tree, of which vice and misery are the branches and fruit; and we suspect, that we shall find out, that just and good government, and due obedience to the precepts of Christianity, would almost, if not altogether, do away with almost all the vice and consequent misery in the world,—and, also, with all checks to population, other than the natural check, which is—moral restraint.

We cannot allow of the illustration, page 25, because it is incompatible with Mr. M.'s own

assertions, which go to make us believe, that there never was, is, or will be, any country in which “the means of subsistence are just equal to the easy support of, and *possessed* by the *whole* of its inhabitants.” If a theory be formed to account for any observed effect, but, in proof of which not a single fact can be produced, we are hardly bound to admit its truth on any man’s *ipse dixit*; but if, further, we clearly perceive the true cause of those effects, and that it is quite distinct from that assigned by the theory, we shall be justified in rejecting the latter as false, and even to inquire of the theorist, what good object he expected to accomplish by its adoption? We do not notice the reasoning about retrograde and progressive movements in the numerical population of different countries; because Mr. M. declines attempting to establish any ulterior process on it. The following propositions fall next under our notice.—

“1st. Population is necessarily limited by the means of subsistence.

“2nd. Population invariably increases where the means of subsistence increase, unless prevented by some very powerful and obvious checks.

“3rd. These checks, and the checks which repress the superior power of population, and keep its effects on a level with the means of

subsistence, are all resolvable into moral restraint, vice, and misery."

On which we may observe, with Mr. M., that the first and second need no proof, although the second is very obscurely expressed; it seems, as if a tacit assumption, that the means of subsistence might exist, and even increase of itself, is always in Mr. M.'s mind; he seems never to have any knowledge of the fact, that, in almost all countries, population must and can produce its means of subsistence. It is further clear, that there can be no place for moral restraint, to check the increase of population, where the means of subsistence are proportionably increased, and that the checks of vice and misery, as also that of moral restraint, are merely effects of some cause or causes. But, although the very title page of the Essay assumes the power of procreation to be that cause, yet, since not a particle of the proof has hitherto been produced thereupon, the third proposition is useless, or irrelevant, until the cause or causes of the vice and misery has been traced, and properly proved; when it will still be inconclusive without the 4th, the main proposition, which Mr. Malthus has here omitted; although, (as we have just observed) it be very fully stated in his title page, and constitutes the basis on which his whole work proceeds, and to which its celebrity is chiefly owing, viz. "Vice

and misery are the past and present effects of the principle of population." It is this 4th proposition that we believe erroneous, and intend to disprove, and establish the following instead:—Vice and misery are the effects of ignorance and defective human institutions; moral restraint and consequent happiness are the effects of knowledge and improved human institutions.

It is true, Mr. M. asserts, "that these three propositions will be sufficiently established, by a review of the checks to population in the past and present state of society;" but why proceed to prove truisms which require no proof? The statement of the subject of inquiry by Mr. M. himself is,—“First, to investigate the causes that have hitherto impeded the progress of mankind towards happiness;” and “secondly, to examine,” &c.; and he has already stated, that the review above-mentioned would prove the power of procreation to be the great cause of human unhappiness; yet, now he proposes to proceed on the review merely to prove the truism which is known to all men of common sense, viz.—that vice, misery, and want of subsistence, are great and effectual checks to population, leaving the causes of the vice, misery, and want, entirely out of his consideration! If, however, Mr. M. has already forgotten, or chuses that he should

appear to have forgotten, "the mode of conducting the subject which naturally presents itself," we are fully determined not to forget it, but will examine how far his facts support his or our statements, and main propositions.

### CHAPTER III.

#### "OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION IN THE LOWEST STAGES OF HUMAN SOCIETY."

THE inhabitants of Terra Del Fuego, upon whom Mr. Malthus commences the review, "have," as he says, "been placed, by the general consent of voyagers, at the bottom of the scale of human beings." But why are they placed at the bottom of the scale of human beings? Mr. M., our author, states, that "it is caused by their brutish ignorance; for though they are "halfstarved, and shivering with cold, covered with filth and vermin, and live in one of the most inhospitable climates of the world, they have not *sagacity enough* to provide themselves with such conveniences as might mitigate its severities, and render life comfortable!"

If we ask whether any facts can be produced concerning them, tending to prove, that the power of procreation has produced and continues the misery he has described?—the an-



swer must be—None whatever. Of the inhabitants of the Andaman Islands, “ every thing which voyagers have related of savage life, is said to fall short of the barbarism of this people : their whole time is spent in search of food ; but, as they practise no sort of cultivation, and their woods yield them few or no supplies of animals and but little vegetable diet, their principal occupation is that of climbing the rocks, or roving along the margin of the sea, in search of a precarious meal of fish, which, during the S. W. monsoon, they often seek for in vain. Their stature seldom exceeds five feet, their bellies are protuberant, with high shoulders, large heads, and limbs disproportionately slender. Their countenances exhibit the extreme of wretchedness, a livid mixture of famine and ferocity, and their attenuated and diseased figures plainly indicate the want of wholesome nourishment ; some of these unhappy beings have been found on the shores in the last stages of famine.”

Now, what other cause than ignorance can the author assign for the miserable situation of those people ? Certainly none, besides ignorance ; because, those people are of the Negro race, to whose physiological constitution the climate is favourable, for their islands are situated between the parallels of  $10^{\circ}$  and  $14^{\circ}$  N. nearly opposite to Madras, on the east side of

the entrance of the Bay of Bengal, and the soil is excellent, susceptible of high cultivation, and of yielding abundant means of subsistence. The author, indeed, does not appear to have been aware of any other cause, such as the power of procreation, or, to use his own phraseology, "the principle of population," having operated so as to produce the misery of those people. If he had, doubtless, he would have stated it most prominently.

Let us proceed with the review. The native inhabitants of Van Dieman's Land are the next in order; but he has very little or nothing to say concerning them which does not equally apply to the inhabitants of New Holland: and, therefore, he proceeds to "investigate" their condition, and commences with quoting a choice specimen of philosophical reasoning from the writer of Cook's first voyage, thus:—"By what means the inhabitants of this country are reduced to such a number as it can subsist, is not very easy to guess." There, now! is not that writer a philosopher of the author's own stamp, and according to his own heart? You see, the writer of this precious quotation takes for granted, that mankind can exist without the means of subsistence! Mr. M. thinks it absolutely necessary to assign the means whereby the inhabitants *are* reduced to such numbers as the country *can* subsist; but as

you may be rather impatient of the author's beautiful prolixity of quotation, he refers you to Mr. Collins's History for an account of their habits and manners, and contents himself with observing, "in a country, the inhabitants of which are driven to such resources for subsistence, where the supply of food, either animal or vegetable, is so extremely scanty, and the labour to procure it is so severe; it is evident that the population must be very thinly scattered in proportion to the territory: the woods, exclusive of the animals occasionally found in them, afford but little sustenance,—a few berries, the yam, the fern roots, and the flowers of the different banksias, make up the whole of the catalogue."

Now, reader, do you think that if these people possessed the knowledge of cultivation and government, and of the consequent comforts and advantages which are possessed by the British colonists of their country, that they could not increase their means of subsistence; and also their numbers, while they at the same time obviated all the vice and misery which the author has described and referred to, as existing among them at present?

If these inhabitants were reduced to a few families by cessation of procreation, or were increased, by the means we have mentioned, in which condition do you suppose it likely they

would experience the greatest degree of happiness ?

Finding that Mr. M. has not any facts to produce concerning these people, which tends to prove the truth of the assumption we have already mentioned, we must suppose that we shall find its proof in the course of the work ; meanwhile, we would know the reason why the author chose to describe the ravages of the small-pox among the native inhabitants, as being caused by a dreadful epidemic disease, when he must have known, from some of the works on New South Wales, that it actually was the small-pox with which they had been infected by the colonists. Doubtless, he had his reasons for so doing ; and we suppose that it would not require a very shrewd guess to find them out.

## CHAPTER IV.

### “ OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION AMONG THE AMERICAN INDIANS.”

THIS chapter is a very long and desultory one in the author's book ; therefore, we shall merely recapitulate the leading facts, and his reflections thereupon. “ The ignorance and indolence of the improvident savage would frequently prevent him from extending the benefits of the supplies derived from fishing, much beyond the time when they were actually obtained : as savages are wonderfully improvident, and their means of subsistence always precarious, they often pass from the extreme of want to exuberant plenty, according to the vicissitudes of fortune in the chase, or to the variety in the produce of the seasons : their inconsiderate gluttony in the one case, and their severe abstinence in the other, are equally prejudicial to the human constitution ; and their vigour is, accordingly, at one time impaired by want, and at others by a superfluity of gross aliments and the disor-

ders arising from indigestion. Ignorant of the use of the most simple herbs,\* or of any change in their diet, they die of these diseases in great numbers. The average population of the American nations is, with few exceptions, on a level with the average quantity of food they can obtain in the present state of their industry; it would be strange, indeed, if we heard of any nation living in great plenty, in consequence of their diminished numbers."

What does the author mean by this last sentence? Has he begun to contradict himself already? Surely, he does not intend to charge ignorance and indolence, and their consequences, which he has just pointed out, to the power of procreation? If not, where then are the "evils resulting to human happiness," from the exertion of that power among these people? they are not to be found in this chapter, but, doubtless, will be found by and bye.

We hope, for the author's own sake, that some decent attempt will be made for that purpose; and now we recommend to him that, whenever he is next at leisure, he will peruse, "*Keating's Translation of the History of the Conquest of Mexico*,† by one of the Conquerors," when he

\* Either Mr. M. has here made an inconsiderate assertion, or else the travellers among the American Indians must have made great use of the traveller's privilege.

† We think, that the state and condition of Peru, anterior


will learn that the difficulty, which, in this chapter of his book, he states, to have been experienced by Cortez, in finding subsistence for the small body of Spaniards in the Mexican empire, did not arise from the absolute scarcity of provision, but from the hostile position in which Cortez had placed himself: and the history of the siege of the city of Mexico for so long a period of time, and by so vast an army as were engaged in it, proves, that provisions must have been extremely abundant throughout the country. Now we may sum up our observations on this chapter, by stating that all the evils, vices, and miseries, found among the American Indians, are clearly caused by their ignorance of the mode by which they might be relieved, or of the advantages which would attend such relief; but the power of procreation forms no part of such cause, except it be thought an evil to procreate beings subject to such a miserable state of existence. We are not sure, indeed, but that this might be the author's real meaning, when he made the bold assumption contained in the title page of his Essay.

to the conquest, deserved a little more attention than Mr. M. has thought advisable to bestow.

## CHAPTER V.

### " OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION IN THE ISLANDS OF THE SOUTH SEAS."

THIS chapter of the review opens with a quotation from the Abbé Raynal upon the ancient state of the British Isles, and which is a pretty fair sample of the vast strength of mind possessed by that great philosopher, which enabled him, like so many others of his countrymen, to make such grand excursions in the regions of imagination, by nobly overleaping the petty boundaries of truth and common sense ;—but, in justice to Mr. M., we must observe, that he only adopts such of the Abbé's assertions as suit his own purpose, and, without hesitation, exposes the falsehood and inconsistency of those which are opposed to his favourite theory. In this chapter, he proceeds to say, that " There is no island yet known, the produce of which could not be further increased. This is all that can be said of the whole earth : both are peopled up to their actual produce,





and the whole earth is, in this respect, like an island."

But when he tells us that the whole earth is peopled up to its actual produce, he tells us only what we and every one else knew before. Population are the producers as well as the consumers of "actual produce;" consequently, the cause and the effect must always be in accordance. Look at New Holland in the hands of the natives, and in those of the Austral-British, and there you will at once perceive the difference between actual and possible produce; and, now, to save the trouble of recapitulating such common-place, we, at once, tell Mr. M. and his disciples, that, throughout this chapter, we see, most clearly, that the whole of the vice and misery which is described as existing among the South Sea islanders, is fairly attributable to their ignorance: they have, it is true, become, in some instances, subject to tyrannical institutions also, but tyranny itself is only an effect of partial knowledge amidst general ignorance. We agree with the author, that the question asked in Captain Cook's first voyage, with respect to the thinly scattered savages of New Holland—"By what means the inhabitants of this country are reduced to such a number as it can possibly subsist, may be asked with equal propriety respecting the most populous islands, or the best peopled

countries, in Europe or Asia." But, as we have elsewhere observed, we believe it to be highly absurd rather than "highly curious;" and that the question—What are the causes which keep the population in so miserable a state, and so much below the possible means of subsistence and comfort, which the country they inhabit could be made to yield? or, to use Mr. M's. own expression "can possibly subsist?"—would be much more likely "to lead to the elucidation of some of the most important points in the history of human society." It is stated in a note to this chapter, that, "in a very healthy climate, where the habits of the people were favourable to population, and a community of goods was established, as no individual would have reason to fear particular poverty from a large family, the government would be, in a manner, compelled to take upon itself the suppression of the population by law; and, as this would be the greatest violation of every natural feeling, there cannot be a more forcible argument against a community of goods." We are of opinion, however, that a community of goods may, advantageously for the individuals, exist among voluntary associations of the people, without the government being compelled to take upon itself the suppression of the population by law. We will only further observe, that a community of goods existed among the early

Christians ; and an institution, sanctioned by the apostles, should not be dogmatically rejected by any of their successors—but all this is speculation ; we must, therefore, request Mr. M. to perform his undertaking, of giving a view of the “ past and present effects of the principle of population.” We think that the review of that department of society which has been classed under the head of savage life, affords no one proof of the assertion, that evils result from the principle of population ; and renders the fact apparent, that it has no one advantage over civilized life (whatever it may possess over semi-barbarism,) but has much fewer means of enjoyment, and, consequently, of happiness ; it is mostly a dog’s life, and will not bear any comparison with that of civilized men. Respecting the remarks on Spartan and other Greek and Roman discipline, it is foreign to the present subject, and is, besides, incorrect, as may be seen in the Roman history.

Now let us proceed in our review of the next in order.

## CHAPTER VI.

### “OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION AMONG THE ANCIENT INHABITANTS OF THE NORTH OF EUROPE.”

“A HISTORY of the early migrations and settlements of mankind, with the motives which prompted them, would illustrate, in a striking manner, the constant tendency of the human race to increase beyond the means of subsistence ; without some general law of this nature, it would seem as if the world could never have been peopled.

“A state of sloth, and not of restlessness and activity, seems evidently to be the natural state of man : and this latter disposition could never have been generated, but by the strong goad of necessity, though it might afterwards be continued by habit, and the new associations that were formed from it—the spirit of enterprise, and the thirst of martial glory.”

Take breath, O Reader ! while we remark on what has been just stated. The author does not seem to be aware of the absurdity of attri-

buting to any power or thing, a tendency to produce an impossibility, for such is "the increase of mankind beyond the means of subsistence."—The cause must, indeed, precede the effect, but cannot be separated from it. The assertion, that a state of sloth is the natural state of man, immediately brings monkish institutions into our mind's eye, as the places most likely to have generated such an opinion.

The general cause of which the author speaks must have been, at first, very powerful in its operations: and, therefore, ere we grant the existence of any such general cause, as a foundation for his theory of the origin of evil, we wish for his answers to the few following questions.—What is the reason that the native inhabitants of America, from Northern Canada to the equinoctial line, and from the line to Cape Horn, are of one general appearance, of a copper complexion, strait coarse dark hair, &c. ? What is the cause that the whole native population of Africa\* are woolly haired, and have that peculiar formation of features and black tinge of skin which distinguish them, and that the same race are found inhabiting the cold mountains of the Malayan Peninsula, the fertile and extensive island of New Guinea, as also

\* By the term "native population," we mean to exclude all the Northerns of pure or mixed Arab or European blood.

some of its neighbouring isles—New Holland and Van Dieman's Land, situated in a climate similar to that of England? The Chinese have, in all probability, been settled in the Northern temperate zone, full as long as the Europeans. Yet the former are very dissimilar to the latter in their appearance—how does the author account for the difference? How is it that the white race are not found in the temperate regions of Eastern Asia, nor in those of Africa and America, as well as in Europe and Western and Middle Asia, if climate can produce the difference of external appearance found among mankind? If they did not separate until forced to do so by the effects of the principle of population, a considerable time must have elapsed afterwards ere Western Europe, America, Africa, and the Islands of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, were colonized; and, consequently, the time remaining for climate to effect those astonishing changes, not only in external appearances, but in the internal conformation,\* is much shorter than can readily be supposed necessary. We believe that the scriptures furnish a true account of the cause which effected the dispersion of mankind: but the author contradicts those sacred writings, by pretending to assign another quite different cause; therefore,

\* See Lawrence's Lectures on Physiology.

since his philosophical speculations tend to set aside the authority of the Scriptures, we will not admit of his having recourse to them, for any part of the answers to the foregoing questions; but, even if the assumption were proved, it would not shew us, what are the evils arising from the principle of population.

After reading through the whole of this chapter, we are led by it to the following conclusions;—that the population of ancient Europe was bounded by the means of subsistence; that whether such means were found among themselves, or their neighbours, is not material to the main question; that whatever evils and miseries they endured themselves, or inflicted on others, or whatever vices they practised, were clearly and solely the consequences of their ignorance, or that of their neighbours; and that all which has yet been proved, required no proof; and that not a particle of evidence has hitherto been adduced to justify the arrogant assumption of the title page of the Essay. We, moreover, think it not impossible, that the ancient inhabitants of Northern Europe were much more numerous than they are now thought to have been,—of which, we think, there exist many strong indications; and it is not improbable, that whole nations sometimes forsook their northern habitations, in a mass, for the purpose of going to conquer and

inhabit more southern and fertile countries, which, in their ignorance, they supposed to be of easy accomplishment;—a noted instance of which may be cited in the account of the Helvetic emigration, contained in Cæsar's Commentaries. A country, abandoned by the inhabitants, soon degenerates into wilderness, woods, and morasses. We have been in Sweden, and Norway, &c., where, as in the Northern Islands, and Highlands of Scotland, numerous indubitable marks of cultivation are to be seen in situations which, on account of their elevation and barrenness, cannot now be advantageously cultivated.

We think people do not sufficiently consider the vast quantity of labour expended in modern Europe, in procuring luxuries, comforts, and enjoyments, unknown to our ancestors, and the great increase which might be made to the actual means of subsistence, if but a tithe of the labour so expended were employed on the cultivation of the soil; almost the largest portion of the vast foreign trade of the British isles, and, consequently, the labour employed therein, both immediately and remotely, is really expended on the procuring those luxuries. The article of tea, alone, consumes many millions worth of national labour annually, partly in taxes for the use of government, and partly in enabling the English East India Com-



pany to incur treble charges of freight, &c., and to make their shipping and officers mimic those of the Royal Navy, and to enable the latter to engage in the borough-mongering business after a few voyages. What an immense disproportion is there between the numbers of the military, civil, judicial, medical, and clerical persons, and their families, which are now regularly and constantly supported by the labouring population of modern Europe, as compared with the ancients. It is, indeed, probable, that more than the whole difference in the quantity of produce raised by modern European agriculture beyond that of the ancients, is consumed in the manner explained. Neither does it appear to be sufficiently considered, that when a tribe or family occupied a valley or glen, and employed themselves solely on its cultivation, they would have a superabundance of labour beyond what was wanted to cultivate that part which could yield a profit; and, therefore, it was better for them to employ that superabundant labour on the rest of the land, (although the returns might not even be adequate to replace the food expended while cultivating it,\*) because they must have consumed food, whether they laboured or not;

\* The most barren mountains in Scotland could be profitably made to yield an addition to the means of subsistence, by (otherwise) unemployed labour being expended on it.

and it was better for all to labour, though for little advantage, than not to labour at all : whereas, in modern society, labour has not only more modes of employment ; but, if it cannot produce a surplus it will not be at all employed on the land ; and when, if it cannot be otherwise employed, it must cease to exist, (owing to the dissolution of the ancient social connections,) or exist only on the grudging and forced bounty of others. Let us now examine what is to be found in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VII.

### "OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION AMONG MODERN PASTORAL NATIONS."

IN this Chapter, our author inquires, what are the checks to population among the tribes of the Tartar and Arab races? which checks he finds to be "restraint from increase, owing to the inability to obtain a wife; vicious customs, with respect to women, epidemics, wars,\* famines, and the diseases arising from external poverty." Mankind not being irresistibly compelled to increase their numbers, none of those vices and miseries can be fairly charged to the power of procreation, in any sense whatever.—Even famine itself, probably, in some degree,

\* One can hardly help remarking the little value set on human life, and the bloody disposition evinced by the whole of the genuine Tartar race, from Siberia to New Zealand, and throughout America, as contrasted with the different treatment of the vanquished and the stranger by those of the European and Arab race.

are unavoidable; evil might, doubtless, be greatly mitigated by the adoption of those measures which would be suggested by the general diffusion of knowledge, and the principles of good government; every one of the other evils enumerated may be avoided and remedied by knowledge. Ignorance, therefore, appears to be their only earthly cause.

Mr. Malthus quotes the following passage from Gibbon, on the circumstances of the Arabians:—"The measure of population is regulated by the means of subsistence, and the inhabitants of this vast peninsula might be outnumbered by the subjects of a fertile and industrious province;" to which Mr. M. appends a note, in these words—"It is rather a curious circumstance, that a truth so important, which has been stated and acknowledged by so many authors, should so rarely have been pursued to its consequences," &c. Now, if its consequences were really what Mr. M. assumes, we should agree with him, in wondering that, notwithstanding the information of Revelation, and the investigations of reason, the origin of evil had remained undiscovered until the fifty-eighth century after the creation of mankind; but we must be sure, that the discovery is really made, ere we acknowledge the merits of the discoverer.

Let us pass on to the next, since nothing

more is to be found in this Chapter, tending to prove, that the author's assumed "principle of population" has any share in the production of those vices and miseries.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### “ OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF AFRICA.”

THE parts of Africa, visited by Park, are described by him as neither well peopled nor well cultivated. “ He found many extensive and beautiful districts entirely destitute of inhabitants, and, in general, the borders of the different kingdoms were either very thinly peopled or perfectly deserted. The swampy banks of the Gambia, the Senegal, and other rivers towards the coast, appeared to be unfavourable to population from being unhealthy ; but other parts were not of this description, and it was not possible,” he says, “ to behold the wonderful fertility of the soil, the vast herds of cattle, proper both for labour and for food, and reflect on the means which presented themselves of vast inland navigation, without lamenting, that a country, so abundantly gifted by nature, should remain in its present savage and neglected state.”

To what causes does the author trace this negligence and savage barbarism ?

“The causes of this neglected state clearly appear, however, in the description which Mr. Park gives of the general habits of the negro nations. In a country, divided into at housana petty States, mostly independent and jealous of each other, it is natural, he says, to imagine, that wars frequently originate from very frivolous provocations. The wars of Africa are of two kinds, one called—Killi, that which is openly avowed ; and the other—Tegria, plundering or stealing. These latter are very common, particularly about the beginning of the *dry* season, when the labours of the harvest are over, and provisions are plentiful. These plundering excursions always produce speedy retaliation.”

“The insecurity of property, arising from this constant exposure to plunder, must necessarily have a most baneful effect on industry : the deserted state of the frontier provinces sufficiently proves to what degree it operates.”

Certainly, these are very sufficient causes for effecting the barbarous and unhappy state of those nations ; but we may observe, that Mr. M. has not exhibited any one of them as resulting from the principle of population.

“The nature of the climate is unfavourable to exertion.”

Mere common-place assertion, and quite irrelevant to the subject; but let us hear how Mr. M. accounts for the Negro barbarism.

“As there are not many opportunities of turning to advantage the surplus produce of their labour, we cannot be surprised, that they should, in general, content themselves with cultivating only so much ground as is necessary for their own support.”

Why not increase their numbers?—when they would find it necessary to cultivate more ground, &c. for their own support? Is it no advantage to rear a numerous and, consequently, powerful family or tribe?—Again, “A master is not permitted to sell his domestic slaves, or those born in his own house, *except* in case of famine, to support himself and family; we *may imagine*, therefore, that he will not suffer them to increase beyond the employment he has for them.”

The author “*may imagine*” whatever he pleases; but *why* a master should not suffer his slaves to increase, in a country where their increase can cost him nothing, merely because he has no employment for them, is difficult to say; and more particularly where they constitute a valuable resource in case of famine!—Moreover,—What is the limit which Mr. M. assumes to “finding employment for slaves” in Africa? Is the production of the means of



subsistence and comfort no species of employment? The author will doubtless answer all these questions and objections, and point out distinctly what portion of the evils, he here enumerates, have been produced by the principle of population, in the next edition of his three-volume Essay. "It would be difficult," says Mr. M., "to find the gap which has been made by a hundred years' exportation of Negroes, which has blackened half America."

Although it might be difficult to *find the gap*, it would appear, from the preceding statements of the author's chapter, not difficult to find *many gaps* occasioned thereby. Again—"It appears, that the population is continually pressing against the limits of subsistence; according to Park, scarce years and famines are frequent."

Strange! quite unaccountable, indeed, that, in such a state of society, the actual means of subsistence are not greatly above the level of the population, and the recurrence of famine not guarded against by storing up the superabundance of plentiful seasons! but, what do "the Negro nations really want," for the removal of those evils?

"Security of property, and its general concomitant—industry."

Eh!—what? improved human institutions! Certainly not. Mr. M. must surely have, at

least, been thinking of something else when he wrote this ; he must mean professorial lectures, on the “ evils resulting from the power of procreation.”

Whatever he may have meant, however, he has written what has been cited. The author next proceeds to give a quotation from Bruce, describing the destruction of the agricultural villages, by the pastoral Arabs ; after which, he observes, that, “ under such circumstances of climate,\* and *political situation*, though a greater degree of foresight and industry *might* considerably better their condition and increase their population, the birth of a greater number of children, without those concomitants, would only aggravate their misery, and leave their population where it was.”

These reflections, nevertheless, are not borne out by the quotations from Bruce ; on the contrary, it is clear, from his description, that neither greater foresight nor industry could “ considerably better their condition ;” and, as to the birth of a greater number of children, while the inhabitants are in such a miserable state, not increasing their population, who will think the assertion worth disputing ? Indeed, we are merely told, in this roundabout language,

\* Climate !—what is there in the climate to prevent improvement in the condition of the inhabitants ?

that, under improved human institutions, the condition of those people would be bettered, and their population increased; but our search after the "evils resulting from the power of procreation," or a view of its past and present effects on society, is thus far fruitless.

Let us now hear what our author says of Egypt—"The same may be said of the once flourishing and populous country of Egypt: its present depressed state has not been caused by the weakening of the principle of increase,\* but by the weakening of the principle of industry and foresight consequent on a most *tyrannical and oppressive government*." The author seems to have quite forgotten the title of his Essay, and also to have quite forgotten what he says here, when he penned the following paragraphs:—"But the truth is, that, though human institutions *appear* to be—and, indeed, often are—the *obvious and obtrusive* causes of much mischief to society, they are, in reality, *light and superficial*, in comparison with those deeper seated causes of evil which result from the laws of God and the passions of mankind.†—"There is a principle

\* Who, besides the author and his clan, ever supposed that it had?

† The phrase, "passions of mankind," seems to be intended to serve as a loop-hole, through which to creep on an emergency.

in human society, by which population is kept down to the level of the means of subsistence.” —“ Is it not misery, and the fear of misery, the necessary and inevitable results of the laws of God, in the present stage of human existence, which human institutions, so far from aggravating, have tended considerably to mitigate, though they can never remove?” Now let us again hear the author, in continuation of his account, how far the present condition of Egypt is a past or present effect of the principle of population, and how far the “ human institutions of Egypt have mitigated these miseries, which (according to Mr. M.) they cannot remove.”

“ The remains of ancient works, the vast lakes, canals, and large conduits for water, destined to keep the Nile under controul, serving as reservoirs to supply a scanty year, and as drains and outlets to prevent the superabundance of water in wet years, sufficiently indicate to us, that the ancients, by art and industry, contrived to fertilize a much greater quantity of land, from the overflowings of their river, than is done at present ; and to prevent, in some measure, the distresses which are now so frequently experienced from a redundant or insufficient inundation. It is said, of the governor Petronius, that, effecting by art what was denied by nature, he caused abundance to pre-

vail in Egypt, under the disadvantage of such a deficient inundation, as had always before been accompanied with dearth. A flood too great is as fatal to the husbandman as one that is deficient; and the ancients had, in consequence, drains and outlets to spread the superfluous waters over the thirsty sands of Lybia, and render even the desert habitable. These works are now all out of repair, and, by ill-management, often produce mischief instead of good. The causes of this neglect, and, *consequently*, of the diminished means of subsistence, are obviously to be traced to the *extreme ignorance* and *brutality* of the *Government*, and the *consequent wretched state* of the *people*.

“The Mamelukes, in whom the principal power resides, think only of enriching themselves, and employ, for this purpose, what appears to them to be the simplest method, that of seizing wealth wherever it may be found, of wresting it by violence from the possessor, and of continually imposing new and arbitrary contributions.

“Their *ignorance* and *brutality*, and the constant state of alarm in which they live, prevent them from having any views of enriching the country, the better to prepare it for their plunder.

“No public works, therefore, are to be expected from the Government, and no individual

proprietor *dares* to undertake any improvement which might imply the possession of capital, as it would probably be the immediate signal of his destruction. Under such circumstances, we cannot be surprised, that the ancient works are neglected, that the soil is ill cultivated, and that the means of subsistence, and, consequently, the population, are greatly reduced. —The peasants are allowed for their maintenance only sufficient to keep them alive; a miserable sort of bread, made of Doura, without leaven or flour, cold water, and raw onions, make up the whole of their diet. Meat and fat, of which they are passionately fond, never appear, but on great occasions, and among those who are most at their ease.

“ Their habitations are huts made of earth, where a stranger would be suffocated with the heat and smoke, and where the diseases, generated by want of cleanliness, by moisture, and by bad nourishment, often visit them, and commit great ravages. To these physical evils are added, a constant state of alarm, the fear of the plunder of the Arabs, and the visits of the Mamelukes, the spirit of revenge transmitted in families, and all the evils of a continued civil war.”

Whoever will obstinately make use of their own reason, and refuse to be convinced by the foregoing quotations, “ that human institutions

have tended considerably to mitigate the misery inevitably and necessarily resulting from the laws of God, which they cannot remove, in *Egypt*, must remain unconvinced, for anything else which we can find in this chapter likely to carry conviction to their minds; and we must leave our readers to decide, whether these quotations tend to prove Mr. Malthus's fourth proposition or our's.

## CHAPTER IX.

### “OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION IN SIBERIA, NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN.”

ALTHOUGH we follow Mr. Malthus in the titles of these chapters, yet we think, that the following would be more appropriate, “of the evils and miseries to which mankind are subject in, &c. &c. and of the means whereby they may be removed or mitigated;” however, we shall go on with the examination, and we find, that the checks to population in Northern and Eastern Asia,\* “are occasional famines and epidemic diseases, small pox in particular; the first, occasioned partly by failures in the usual supply of fish, &c., and partly, or rather chiefly, owing to the ignorant indolence of the people themselves;” (who will not exert the principle of population, and cultivate the ground for the support of the increase,—which,

\* The term—Siberia, in the sense given to it by Mr. Malthus, is vague and inapplicable.



indeed, sufficiently shews how *lazy* they are!) “the second derives its principal powers of destruction from their dirty habits, and entire inattention to any degree of cleanliness.”

It does appear to us, that all these are chargeable to the ignorance and indolence of the people; but, if Mr. M. does not mean to assign them as some of the evils resulting from the principle of population, we doubt, whether any of those described in this chapter will be proved to result therefrom. Let us examine further, however:—“In some of the southern parts of Siberia, and in the districts adjoining the Wolga, the Russian travellers describe the soil to be of extraordinary fertility. It consists, in general, of a fine black mould, of so rich a nature, as not to require or even to bear dressing—manure only makes the corn grow too luxuriantly, and subject it to fall to the ground and be spoiled. The only mode of recruiting this kind of land, which is practised, is, by leaving it one year out of three in fallow; and, proceeding in this way, there are some grounds, the vigour of which is said to be inexhaustible. Yet, notwithstanding the facility with which, as it would appear, the most plentiful subsistence might be procured, many of those districts are thinly peopled, and in none of them, perhaps, does population increase in the proportion that might be expected from the nature of the

soil." Here follows a discourse, containing a jumble of true and false opinions, almost every other sentence being either contradictory or irrelevant to the subject, thus :—

"Such countries *seem* to be under that moral impossibility of increasing, which is well described by Sir James Steuart. If, either from the nature of the government or habits of the people, obstacles exist to the settlement of fresh farms, or the subdivision of the old ones, a part of the society may suffer want even in the midst of apparent plenty."—"If from the nature of the government!" True.—Our readers will recollect Mr. M.'s description of the Egyptian government and its effects; but, where is the description of those habits he talks of, as though actually existing among the inhabitants of the countries he is now describing, and as being sufficiently strong to totally check the principle of population? "Again, it is not enough that a country should have the power of producing food in abundance, but the state of society must be such as to afford the means of its proper distribution." Now, can food be distributed, except it be first produced? It is not sufficient that a country has the power to produce:—a country may have the power of producing food in abundance, but may not *actually* produce one man's subsistence: be this as it will, what has it to do with the evidence of the evils

resulting from the principle of population? Is it the principle of population which prevents the production and due distribution of the means of subsistence? And, where does Mr. M. state what are the nature of the government or habits of the people, or both combined, which produce the obstacles he confabulates about in the above sentence? Let us go on, however: "The reason why population goes on so slowly in these countries, is, that the small demand for labour prevents that distribution of the produce of the soil, which, while the divisions of land remain the same, can alone make the lower classes of society partakers of the plenty which it affords." O, most "ingenious philosopher!" wilt thou condescend to explain what thou dost mean by the term "lower classes," in the country of which thou art treating?

Are not the peasantry, the actual cultivators of the soil, the only lower class existing therein? Why, then, should they not partake of the plenty which it affords; and where hast thou shewn us why they do not exert the principle of population, and distribute the produce of their cultivation among their children? What division of land dost thou speak of as preventing the peasantry from increasing their numbers. Are the lords of the country, and the Emperor of Russia, their sovereign, all of the

same way of thinking, which thy prolific imagination has attributed to the African slave masters? Dost thou mean to add one more to thy astounding assertions, by affirming, that the population of any country cannot increase, until a large proportion of the people be first reduced to the condition of day-labourers? We trust, thou wilt answer all these questions in thy next edition; and, therefore, we will now hear what evils thou canst shew to be evident results of the power of procreation in the country of which we are speaking. "The mode of agriculture is described to be extremely simple, and to require very few labourers; in some places the seed is merely thrown on the fallow. The buck wheat is a common culture, and though it is sown very thin, yet one sowing will last five or six years, and produce every year twelve or fifteen times the original quantity, and this is continued until the fertility of the soil begins to diminish." Incomparable logician! because the labours of agriculture are light, and the earth yields the means of subsistence in abundance, and almost spontaneously, therefore population does not increase!—"If, in the best cultivated and most populous countries of Europe, the present divisions of land and farms had taken place, and had not been followed by the introduction of commerce and manufactures, population would long since have come

to a stand, from the total want of motive to farther cultivation, and the consequent want of demand for labour,\* and it is obvious, that the excessive fertility of the country now under consideration would rather aggravate than diminish the difficulty!" This is a clincher! The more fertile any country happens to be, the sooner its population will come to a stand (not for want of land to cultivate, but) from want of motive! And this curious reasoning is found in the work of an author, who sets out therein with asserting, that "Population is always pressed against the *limits* of the means of subsistence, by the power of procreation, and that almost all evils result therefrom; all which it is his object to point out, as also, "the means of their removal!!!"

\* What very peculiar ideas of labour, of commerce, and of manufactures, must Mr. M. have formed in his most ingenious cranium!

## CHAPTER X.

### “OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION IN THE TURKISH DOMINIONS, AND PERSIA.”

Now, again attend to Mr. M.—“In the Asiatic parts of the Turkish dominions, it will not be difficult, from the accounts of travellers, to trace the checks to population, and the causes of its present decay; and, as there is little difference in the manners of the Turks, whether they inhabit Europe or Asia, it will not be worth while to make them the subject of distinct consideration.”

“The fundamental cause of the low state of population in Turkey, compared with its extent of territory, is, undoubtedly, the *nature of the government*. Its *tyranny*, its *feebleness*, its *bad laws*, and *worse administration* of them, together with the consequent insecurity of property, throw such obstacles in the way of agriculture, that the means of subsistence are necessarily decreasing yearly, and with them, of course, the number of people. The miri,

or general land-tax paid the Sultan, is, in itself, moderate ; but, by abuses inherent in the Turkish government, the Pachas and their agents have found out the means of rendering it ruinous. Though they cannot alter the impost which has been established by the Sultan, they have introduced a multitude of changes, which, without the name, produce all the effects of an augmentation. In Syria, according to Volney, having the greatest part of the land at their disposal, they clog their concessions with burdensome conditions, and exact the half, and sometimes even two-thirds, of the crop. When the harvest is over, they cavil about losses ; and, as they have the power in their hands, they carry off what they think proper. If the season fail, they still exact the same sum, and expose every thing that the poor peasant possesses to sale. To these constant oppressions are added, a thousand accidental extortions ; sometimes, a whole village is laid under contribution for some real or imaginary offence. Arbitrary presents are exacted on the accession of each governor ; grass, barley, and straw, are demanded for his horses, and commissions are multiplied, that the soldiers who bear the orders may live upon the starving peasants, whom they treat with the most brutal insolence and injustice."

"The consequence of these depredations is,

that the poorer classes of inhabitants are ruined and unable any longer to pay the miri; become a burden to the village, or fly to the cities or the mountains; but the miri is unalterable, and the sum to be levied must be found somewhere. The portion of those who are thus driven from their homes, falls on the remaining inhabitants, whose burden, though at first light, now becomes insupportable. If they should be visited by two years of drought, and, consequently, famine, the whole village is ruined and abandoned; and the tax which it should have paid is levied on the neighbouring lands. The same mode of proceeding takes place with regard to the tax on the Christians, which has been raised by these means, from three, five, and eleven piastres, at which it was first fixed, to thirty-five, and forty, which absolutely impoverishes those on whom it is levied, and obliges them to leave the country. It has been remarked, that these exactions have made a rapid progress during the last forty years; from which time are dated the decline of agriculture, the depopulation of the country, and the diminution in the quantity of specie carried to Constantinople." "By a natural consequence of this misery, the art of cultivation is in the most deplorable state. The husbandman is without instruments, and those he has are very bad. His plough is frequently



no more than the branch of a tree, cut below a fork and used without wheels. The ground is tilled by asses and cows, rarely by oxen, which would bespeak too much riches. In the districts exposed to the Arabs, as in Palestine, the countryman must sow with his musket in his hand, and scarcely does the corn turn yellow, till it is reaped and concealed in subterraneous caverns ; as little as possible is employed for seed-corn, because the peasants sow no more than is barely necessary for their subsistence. Their whole industry is limited to the supply of their immediate indispensable wants : a little bread, a few onions, and a blue shirt. The peasant lives, therefore, in distress ; but, at least, he does not enrich his tyrant, and the avarice of despotism is its own punishment."

" This picture, which is drawn by Volney, in describing the state of the peasants in Syria, seems to be confirmed by all other travellers in these countries ; and, according to Eton, it represents, very nearly, the condition of the peasants, in the greatest part of the Turkish dominions. Universally, the offices of every denomination are set up to public sale, and in the intrigues of the Seraglio, by which the disposal of all places is regulated, every thing is done by means of bribes : the pachas, in consequence, who are sent into the provinces, exert to the utmost their power of extortion, but are

always outdone by the officers immediately below them ; as they are, in their turn, by their subordinate agents, &c. &c.\*

“ The effect of such a system of government on agriculturure, need not be insisted upon, the causes of the decreasing means of subsistence are but too obvious, and the checks which keep the population down to the level of these decreasing resources may be traced with nearly equal certainty, and will appear to include almost *every* species of vice and misery that is known.”

We believe Mr. M. spoke feelingly, when he said, that the causes of the vice and misery to be found in Turkey “ are but too obvious ;” they are so, indeed. But, Mr. Malthus, be of good heart, man ! for, although they “ include, in their effects, almost every species of vice and misery that is known,” they are in reality light and superficial in comparison with those deeper-seated causes of evil *inevitably* resulting from the laws of God, and the constitutions of man-

\* It appears, from these and other facts in the history of mankind, that a pure despotism is by no means so baneful to the happiness of its subjects, as that of a government supported by corruption. Every corrupt government has ruined both the country and the character of the people over whom it has been exercised ; whereas, pure despotism, such as that of Peter the Great of Russia, and his successors to this time, has raised the character of the people, and very materially forwarded the improvement of mankind.

kind, and which the Turkish government has, without doubt, in your imagination at least, like all other "human institutions, tended considerably to mitigate, though they cannot remove!"

"It will not be worth while to enter more minutely on the checks to population in Persia, as they seem to be nearly similar to those which have been just described, in the Turkish dominions." Indeed! and are the statements, contained in the foregoing extracts, really furnished, as proving "the evils resulting from the power of procreation in Turkey and Persia," or as a "view of the past and present effects of the principle of population?" If so, those who admit them as such must be blessed with a pretty obliquity of understanding.

## CHAPTER XI.

### "OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION IN INDOSTAN AND TIBET."

"IN the ordinances of Menu, the Indian legislator, which Sir William Jones has translated, and called the 'Institutions of Hindu Law,'—marriage is considered as an object of the first importance." It, however, appears from Mr. M.'s own account, that those Institutes contrive to be as self-contradictory on the subject of marriage as on most others. He has found out, however, that "the division of the people into classes, and the continuance of the same profession in the same family, would be the means of pointing out to each individual, in a clear and distinct manner, his future prospects respecting a livelihood, and, from the gains of his father, he would be easily enabled to judge whether he could support a family by the same employment." There now, what a beautiful defence of the institution of caste! Oh! ye historians, and writers of and upon India! Ye mis-

sionaries !—ye friends of India !—ye friends of Christianity, and ye friends of humanity, how egregiously you have been mistaken as to the effects and intention of the institution of caste !!! Nevertheless, on looking at the grand defence again, we are inclined to think, that its basis may require the following addition to its power of supporting the superstructure. Because, the quantity and species of employment, and the real wages of labour, never fluctuate ; or only according to fixed laws, easily understood and acted on by the meanest capacity.

With respect to “disgrace attaching to engaging in other employments among the East Indians,” Mr. M. ought to know, that the pernicious idea of disgrace attaching to manual labour, which has been, and is, productive of such complicated mischief to mankind, does not exist with any *peculiar* force in India. With us, a life of idleness and a life of a gentleman are almost synonymous terms ; and sloth and ease are considered fashionable and genteel : for which *useful* prejudice, as Burke would have termed it, we are doubtless indebted to *gallant chivalry*, and the monkish institutions of holy mother church. And now, indeed, Mr. M. has affirmed it, and confuted Addison’s opinions, by the simple assertion, that “a state of sloth is the natural state of man.”—Regarding “the

considerable difficulty," which Mr. M. supposes an Hindoo man must have, to "find exactly such a companion as the legislator prescribes," he may just as pertinently assert, that a Jew or a Christian must have considerable difficulty to find exactly such a wife as Solomon describes, and that they cannot marry any other.

Periodical famines, caused by unseasonable weather, are not caused by the power of procreation, and are not to be obviated by reducing the numbers of the population, but by the foresight of the people, being made advantageous to themselves, and on the effects of their government, but principally of the latter, whereby the superabundant produce of one season may be made to supply the deficiencies of another. The people may wish to adopt the means of obviation, but be unable to do so from the nature of the government.

Mr. Malthus goes on to assert, that "the difficulties of rearing a family were felt among the middle and higher classes of society, and that it has driven them to the practice of infanticide. The food of the country, (says he,) would be meted out to the major part of the population in the smallest shares that could support life;" and, "the checks to population would, of course, fall principally on the Sudra class."

It appears from the most competent testi-

mony, that the wages of labour in Bengal will purchase eight times the quantity of wheat that it purchases in Britain; that the average time devoted to labour by the natives does not amount to six hours daily; and, that the Sudras are full three-fourths of the population.\* Be it remembered, too, that wheat is dear in proportion to other articles of food and necessities; and that there is little or no taxation, except on the article of salt, and one or two other commodities; because, a portion of the land rent is reserved for the support of the Government; and further, that, for nearly sixty years, Bengal has been in a state of peace a longer period than it ever enjoyed for, perhaps, more than a thousand years before. Let these facts be attentively considered, and then we will let our readers pronounce on the degree of knowledge of India, possessed by one of the principal tutors to its young statesmen, governors, &c. &c.

When Mr. M. shall have proved to us, that the celibacy enjoined by the Romish church originated in the philosophical fears of redundant population, then we shall admit the correctness of his assumptions, respecting the origin of the celibacy enjoined in Tibet, and of the female

\* Vide "The Friend of India, printed at Serampore."—  
See, also, the same publication, respecting the vast quantity of good cultivable land laying waste in Bengal, &c. &c.

infanticide of the rajpoots of India ; also, whenever he proves, that the numbers of the Nayr and Tibetan females bear so small a proportion to the numbers of the males, that *every* woman may have attached to her from two to seven or eight males, then we shall believe, that the French fashionable classes, under the ancien regime, imitated the Nayr manners, from the same cause, and on the same philosophical principles.

Mr. Turner's supposition of the frequency of infanticide in China, we, who have been in, and seen a little of, that country, believe to be erroneous; and, consequently, that the deductions drawn therefrom, by Mr. M., are equally so. Of Mr. Turner's philosophical talents, and knowledge of the human character, the following is a specimen pronounced by Mr. M. to be "so just and important, that it cannot be too often repeated."—"Thus I unexpectedly discovered, (he says,) where I had constantly seen the round of life moving in a tranquil regular routine, a mass of indigence and idleness, of which I had no idea. But yet it by no means surprised me, when I considered, that, wherever indiscriminate charity exists, it will never want objects on which to exercise its bounty, but will always attract expectants more numerous than it has the means to gratify. No human being can suffer want at Teshoo Loomboo.



It is on this humane disposition that a multitude even of mussulmen, of a frame probably the largest and most *robust* in the world, place their reliance for the mere maintenance of a *feeble* life ; and, besides these, I am informed that no less than three hundred Hindoos, Goseins and Suniasses, are daily fed at this place by the Lama's bounty."

The very style and composition of this quotation proclaim it the work of a master ; nevertheless, we must take leave to observe, that it is hardly just thus to assign "indiscriminate charity" as the sole cause of the number of beggars, without reference to the principles which regard "idleness and beggary as religious and honourable ;" the wonder is not, that so many hundreds are fed by the Lama's bounty, but that they are not many more thousands, which certainly ought to be the case, if a "state of sloth be the natural state of man," and if "no human being can suffer want at Teshoo Loomboo."

We believe, manual labour is, and ought to be, esteemed the law of nature ; it is healthful, it is the road to happiness, and is *truly* honourable in the highest degree. It is very plausible to talk of quartering idle individuals, and their families, on the public, under the pretence of encouraging "intellect to expatiate in the fields of thought." The Bramins of India and Tibet

have been quartered on the working classes, under that pretence, for upwards of two thousand years, and a pretty expatiation they have made of it! and vast benefits their countrymen in particular, and mankind in general, have derived therefrom!—Throughout this chapter, as of those already examined, no facts are adduced to prove, that any of the enumerated evils result, or have resulted, from the principle of population, unless we would accept gratuitous assumptions and suppositions in lieu of proof, which, not being disposed to do, we proceed to the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XII.

### “ OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION IN CHINA AND JAPAN.”

WE agree with Mr. Malthus, that there is but little reason to doubt, that the population of China is between two and three hundred millions; and we further believe, “that it is on the increase,”—because, we know that much of the country, towards the frontiers in particular, is yet uncultivated. The accounts which are given of the extreme degree to which cultivation is carried in that country; are far from being applicable to all China proper, and much less so to Chinese Tartary. Mr. M. observes, with a sort of wonder as it were, that “Even the soldiers of the Chinese army, except during the short intervals of the guards which they are called upon to mount, &c., are mostly employed in agriculture.” What better mode of employing them has Mr. M. in his eye? True policy would dictate, that soldiers of other countries, nearer home, should be employed in

making roads, cutting canals, building bridges, &c., during time of peace, or when lying at home unengaged in warlike operations; and that such a mode of employment would be better, both for them and the State, than being cooped up in barracks, spoiling their arms and clothes by inordinate rubbing and burnishing, and filling their lungs with pipe clay. It is true, that "the population, which has arisen naturally from the fertility of the soil, and the encouragements to agriculture, may be considered as genuine and desirable;" and that "all which has been added, by (unnatural) encouragements to marriage\* has been an addition of so much misery;"—but, that "it has, moreover, completely interrupted the happiness which all the rest might have enjoyed,"—only adds one more to the already too numerous list of unproved and unfounded assertions. We must, however, here repeat our standing question—Can Mr. M. pretend to exhibit the evils arising from unnatural excitements held forth to marriage by the religious tenets of the people, and the policy of their Government, as, in reality, resulting from the power of procreation? or as being its past and present effects?

\* By unnatural encouragements, we would be understood to mean, those which are not grounded on, and resulting from, proper measures, for the simultaneous increase and better distribution of the means of subsistence.

"The natural tendency to increase is every where so great, that it will generally be found easy to account for the height at which population is found in any country." This passage is irrelevant, obscure, and incorrect. On Mr. M.'s own hypothesis, the natural tendency to increase—and, we may truly add, the natural power of the earth to yield subsistence to mankind—is as great among the scattered tribes of savages on the banks of the Mississippi, or the peasants on the banks of the Wolga, as among the Chinese on the banks of the Pei-ho or the Quan-Tong. The natural tendency to increase is, therefore, inadequate to account for the vast difference in the numbers of the population of different countries.—"The more difficult, as well as the more interesting, part of the inquiry, is to trace the immediate causes which stop its further progress." If it be so very "difficult to trace the immediate causes," what must it be to trace the remote causes? However, the difficulty of the first case is not so great as Mr. M.'s statement would lead us to expect. It is only to find out, that mankind cannot live without food; which is the only result produced by Mr. M. from his "difficult and interesting inquiry."

Respecting the practice of infanticide, we are fully persuaded, that its amount has been grossly exaggerated; nevertheless, it is fairly

chargeable on the unnatural excitements to marriage. "The average produce of China," or of any other country, is, and must be, adequate to the support of the inhabitants; it is, therefore, clearly impossible, consistently with truth, to assert, that "it is already insufficient to support the over-flowing multitude."

Famines are, as already observed, unavoidable in most countries, unless proper means of counteraction be adopted, such as—freedom of commerce, public granaries,\* &c. &c. That the consumption of grain in distillation may be one cause of famine, is not, perhaps, so gross an error as Mr. M. asserts it to be. Where the power of prohibiting distillation, during the times of scarcity, is faithfully exerted, its tendency will, doubtless, be as asserted, viz. beneficial to the people; but if that power do not exist, or is not honestly exerted, its effects must be injurious. If, moreover, the tendency of distillation, to keep the population below the average means of subsistence, without thereby at all bettering their condition in that respect, as also to produce vice and immorality, be taken into consideration, it will clearly appear, that such mode of providing public granaries is most impolitic and detestable; and that it is

\* Merchants' warehouses, under a perfectly free trade in corn, are incomparably the most deficient sort of public granaries.

the bounden duty of good Governments to discourage it, even to utter annihilation, if possible. It is highly probable, that the deficiencies mentioned as occurring in the public granaries in China, through the dishonesty of the inferior mandarins, are principally owing to the temptations held out to them by distillation. If so, China would not, in case of discontinuing distillation, be more subject to famines than she is at present, and would certainly be able to support a greater population.

What the Chinese really want, ere they can possibly be happier than at present, is the diffusion among them of correct principles of moral conduct, founded on, and enforced by, rational Christianity.

The withdrawal of all unnatural excitements to the increase of population, and of discouragements to foreign commerce; and an amelioration, in some respects, of the present practices of their Government; would prove to be the most effectual means of obviating or alleviating the accidental and periodical miseries to which mankind are liable in China.

If "the principal cause of the populousness of Japan be, without doubt, as in China, the persevering industry of the natives, directed, as it has always been, principally to agriculture," what becomes of the assumed forcing power of the principle of population? It is

an incorrect insinuation, that internal trade and manufactures have been discouraged, because foreign trade has been so, by the Tartar-Chinese Government, through jealousy of European power, and by the Japanese, from experience of Portuguese and Dutch villainy and treachery ; but, granting the correctness of the insinuation, how does it tally with the opinions expressed by Mr. M. in his chapter on Siberia, &c. ?

If the " state of Japan resembles, in so many respects, that of China, that a particular consideration of it would lead into too many repetitions," we may conclude, that the evils and miseries found in Japan are effects of causes similar to those observed in China. If so, what are the evils, and where are they to be found, which inevitably result from the power of procreation, in China and Japan ?



## CHAPTER XIII.

### "OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION AMONG THE ANCIENT GREEKS."

"It has been generally allowed, and will not, indeed, admit of a doubt, that the more equal division of property among the Greeks and Romans, in the early periods of their history, and the direction of their industry, principally, to agriculture, must have tended greatly to the natural encouragement of population. Agriculture is not only, as Hume states, that species of industry which is chiefly requisite to the subsistence of multitudes, but it is, in fact, the sole species by which multitudes can exist, (if either confined to the produce of their own soil, by prohibitory laws, or by being destitute of articles exchangeable for the surplus produce of their neighbours,) and all the numerous arts and manufactures of the modern world, by which such numbers appear to be supported, have no tendency whatever to increase the population, except so far as they tend

to increase the quantity, and facilitate the products, of agriculture;" all this is correct. But, what nation, during the early period of its history, was without a more equal division of its property? and, what has it to do with proving the main propositions of the Essay, or investigating the causes of the vices and miseries of mankind, and pointing out the means of their removal? And further still;— does it make for or against Mr. M.'s assertions respecting the Siberian peasantry? or, does it carry in it any proof of the following most extraordinary assertion:—"In countries where, from the operation of particular causes, property, in land, is divided into very large shares; these arts and manufactures are absolutely necessary to the existence of any very considerable population. Without them, modern Europe would be unpeopled!"

Mr. M.'s *own* notions of the nature and effects of trade and manufactures, and of the division of property into large shares, wholly and fairly put in print, would furnish an excellent article for the cabinets of the curious. Does the state of the divisions of property in land, and the amount of trade and manufactures in England and Ireland, correspond to the respective numbers of their population, according to Mr. M.'s assertions respecting modern Europe?

Mr. M. might by this time have perceived,

that "the best planned schemes of republican equality and happiness," are those wherein equality of rights and security of property are assured to every individual; and no deprivation of rights suffered in order to confer privileges on any man, or classes of men, not absolutely and clearly necessary for the general good.

Whatever statesmen, pseudo-philosophers, and sages, may have thought, acted, or written, to the contrary, few persons of sound common sense could ever be unaware, that "to encourage the birth of children without providing for their support," might cause "a very small accession to the population of a country, at the expense of a very great accession of misery;" but, can the misery produced by such causes be fairly exhibited, as an evil inevitably resulting from the power of procreation?

All the reasoning, real or apparent, contained in this chapter concerning the republics of Greece, &c., either actual or proposed, tends only to prove the self-evident truth; that, if any unnatural excitements are applied to the increase of population, such as equalization of property, &c. &c. unnatural means will be required to counteract the evils thereby produced.

The old adage, of "God never made his work for man to mend," is here peculiarly applicable. Let the power of procreation alone, and do not hinder or destroy the production of

the means of subsistence, nor divert it from the support of industry to that of idleness ; and then make yourselves easy about the matter : but if you will be interfering, and meddling, do not blasphemously assert, that the consequences of your bungling or destructive interference are “ the necessary and inevitable results of the laws of God, and of the manner in which he has constituted mankind.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

### "OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION AMONG THE ROMANS."

DOUBTLESS the power of procreation is sufficient to enable mankind to recruit their numbers very fast, after being thinned by war\*, pestilence, &c.; but, that is not denied by us; and, therefore, needs no argumentation for its support.

The practice of infanticide,—the existence of slavery,—the depravity of morals, &c., cannot be charged to the power of procreation solely on Mr. M.'s *ipse dixit*; he must first shew, by adequate evidence, that the "strange and unnatural state of Rome," was a necessary and inevitable result of that power. Since, however correct the assertion may be, that, "all the checks to population, which have been hitherto considered in the course of this review of

\* Modern wars tend, first, to excite an extraordinary increase of population, and then to impoverish, or, in other words, render it redundant in the belligerent countries, by compelling it to furnish an income to the owners of the capital destroyed during the prosecution of the war.

human society, are clearly resolvable into moral restraint, vice, and misery," it proves nothing; because, these are only effects, and for all of them, and every ingredient of which they are composed, Mr. M. has himself exhibited adequate causes, very different, indeed, from that of the principle of population. When Mr. M. has proved that those are evils inevitably and necessarily resulting from the principle of population, or, in other words, "the past and present effects" of that principle, then it will be time to inculcate the desirableness of knowing the strength of either or all of those checks.

That, "in most countries considered, the population seems to have been seldom measured accurately, according to the average and permanent\* means of subsistence," is an observation which, even overlooking its obscure and nonsensical composition, and admitting its correctness, can be no cause of surprise, unless we had discovered wiser, that is, more perfect human institutions, generally adopted in them, and a consequent state of society, both externally and internally favourable to the due developement of the effects producible by such institutions.

\* What can Mr. M. mean by the term "permanent," as applied by him to the means of subsistence?

## BOOK II.

*“Of the Checks to Population in the different States of Modern Europe.”*

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### CHAPTER I.

*“OF NORWAY.”*

THROUGHOUT this chapter, Mr. Malthus confines his labours to the business of proving, that the preventive or natural check of moral restraint, (on the non-existence of which his work was originally founded, and which he still treats as merely supposititious, when its utility to his purpose,) is in Norway, almost, if not altogether, the only one in actual operation, and the vices and miseries which he assumes to result from the principle of population, have no place, or are not to be found there. How far such labours conduce to prove the main propositions of his Essay we have yet to learn, as also, whether moral restraint be an effect of the

principle of population. Can a fountain at once send forth both bitter water and sweet? We are further informed, by way of corroborating the assertions already quoted from pages 246 and 248 of the Essay, &c., that the human institution known under the appellation,—Danish government,—has been taking measures of which “many of the most thinking and best informed persons, express their apprehension!”

We find nothing in this chapter to alter our opinion, that the preventive or natural check would operate as regularly and happily in any other country of Europe, as it is described to do in Norway, if it were not weakened and destroyed by the pernicious measures recommended and pursued by would-be philosophers, legislators, statesmen, war-makers, luxury-votaries, and hypocrites. We believe, also, *en passant*, that an aggregate quantity of land, (may) support a greater number of people than could be done by the sum of its component parts, if separated from each other; and, when Mr. M. points out what are the “evils resulting from the principle of population,” and demonstrates the truth of his assertion, “that modern Europe would be unpeopled, but for the introduction of modern arts and manufactures,” then we also will prove the truth of this our assertion.



## CHAPTER II.

### "OF SWEDEN."

WE learn, from this chapter, that "Sweden is, in many respects, in a state similar to that of Norway;" but that the human institution, in other words, government of Sweden, by its foolish endeavours to increase population, without taking simultaneous effective measures to increase the means of subsistence, and by its frequent embarkation in foreign wars, has introduced vice and misery in full proportion. Mr. M. asserts, that "they (the registers of births, &c.) clearly prove, that its population has a very *strong tendency to increase*;" and immediately tells us, that "the government has occupied itself in *every measure* which appeared proper to *increase* the population of the country!" The establishment of lying-in and foundling hospitals is not likely to be very effective for this purpose; but some of its measures, by repealing or undoing the acts of former human institutions, have been productive of

much benefit; such are, the granting of free commerce in corn—the encouragement of agriculture and subdivision of farms, &c., which has enabled the population to increase from 2,229,661, in 1751, to 3,043,731, in 1799. “ This is a very considerable addition to the permanent population of the country, which has accompanied a proportional increase in the produce of the soil, as the imports of corn are not greater than they were formerly; and there is, therefore, reason to think, that the condition of the people is, on an average, better.”

“ The patience with which the lower classes of people in Sweden bear these severe pressures, (of famine,) is perfectly astonishing, and can only arise from their being left entirely to their own resources;\* and from the belief, whether well or ill founded, that they are submitting to the great law of necessity, and not to the caprices and extortions of their rulers. Every man will submit with becoming patience to evils which he believes to arise from the general laws of nature; but where govern-

\* This is an oblique hit at the English poor laws; we must, however, try to defend our eyes and understanding both from mist and mystification. Would to God, that the inhabitants of the Britannic Union were left to their own resources! we should then see, whether the labourers or the splendid paupers would be the first to cry out for assistance from their parishes.

ment, and the higher classes of society, have, by a perpetual interference with the concerns of the lower classes, endeavoured to persuade them that all the good which they enjoy, is conferred upon them by their rulers and rich benefactors, it is natural that they should attribute all the evils which they suffer to the same source." Now, just observe Mr. M.'s idea of human nature: because you confer benefits on a man, or, if he only thinks that you do, he will *naturally* attribute, to you, all the evil which he may suffer!!! Noticing the prohibition of distillation, Mr. M. observes, that "the measure itself was certainly calculated to benefit the people;" how the same measure could be beneficial in Sweden and pernicious in China, is not explained.

"On observing many spots of this kind, (bearing marks of former cultivation,) both in Norway and Sweden, I could not help being struck with the idea, that, though for other reasons, it was very little probable, such appearances certainly made it seem possible that these countries might have been better peopled formerly than at present; and that lands which are now covered with forests, might have produced corn a thousand years ago. Wars, plagues, or that greater depopulator than either, —a tyrannical government, might have suddenly destroyed or expelled the greatest part

of the inhabitants; and a neglect of the land, even for twenty or thirty years, in Norway or Sweden, would produce a very strange alteration in the face of the country.\* But this is merely an idea which I could not help mentioning, but which the reader already knows has not had weight enough with me to make me suppose the fact in any degree probable." On this we may remark, that, but for preconceived theories, Mr. M. would have thought, with us, that ancient northern Europe was much more populous than some have supposed; and that we here find him broadly acknowledging, that a tyrannical government is more mischievous to mankind than wars or plagues, although the evils it introduces "are light and superficial," compared with those resulting from the principle of population. How such observations as these tend to prove this main assumption and proposition of the Essay on Population, &c., we are quite at a loss to understand. Nevertheless, what are the evils purely resulting from the principle of population in Sweden? this chapter saith not.

We think, that "if, as some of the Swedish economists assert, their country ought to have a population of nine or ten millions," it is not

\* And in its *permanent* means of subsistence, also, we should be inclined to suppose.

absolutely "necessary to make her produce food sufficient for such a number," if she can only sufficiently increase her produce of iron, &c., and any other country will furnish wheat, rice, &c., in exchange.

## CHAPTER III.

### "OF RUSSIA."

THE commencement of this chapter consists of an exhibition of lists of births, marriages, and deaths, which, though inconsistent with each other, and successively proved to be erroneous, by Mr. M. himself, are nevertheless adopted by him, as the basis of much desultory and irrelevant reasoning; but no proof being even attempted to be adduced therefrom, that the power of procreation is the cause of vice and misery, we may pass it over without further notice.

Respecting foundling hospitals, we think Mr. M. generally right in his statements of their evil consequences; but we further think, that those of Petersburg and Moscow are, on the whole, productive of much more good than evil. It is no inconsiderable advantage to such a people, that a number of free and educated persons are thus annually produced in a land of slavery and barbarism. We should, however, wish to know

which are the foundling hospitals that “endeavour to teach mothers, that their love for new-born infants is a prejudice which it is the interest of their country to eradicate!”

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to prove, that the slavery of the peasantry, and the ignorance and indolence of their masters, the nobility, are the great checks to the increase of population ; but no endeavour is made to shew, that any part, much less the whole of the vice and misery found in Russia, is caused by the power of procreation: indeed, we must acknowledge, in justice to Mr. M., that he here displays his “characteristic candor,” though at the expense of his cause, in generally taking care to confirm our view of this subject, by pointing out, that the real causes of the vice and misery which he brings forward in the review, are ignorance and defective human institutions, lest we might fall into the mistake of attributing those effects to the principle of population; and, in this case, as in all the preceding, it is shewn to have been caused by the political human institutions of the country; and that, as these have been improved, their evil effects have been mitigated in due proportion.

## CHAPTER IV.

### "OF THE MIDDLE PARTS OF EUROPE."

MR. M. here informs us, that "in the middle parts of Europe, the division of labour, the distribution of employments, and the proportion of the inhabitants of towns to the inhabitants of the country, differ so little from what is observable in England, that it would be in vain to seek for the checks to population in any peculiarity of habits and manners sufficiently marked to admit of description; he shall, therefore, endeavour to direct the reader's attention, principally, to some inferences drawn from the lists of births, marriages, and deaths, in different countries; and these data will, in many important points, give us more information respecting their internal economy, than we could receive from the most observing traveller."—Information respecting their internal economy! that is not what Mr. M. should busy himself about, but in pointing out what evils are found among them resulting from the laws of God, &c. &c.



The important points, however, on which we receive information, are, first, that as countries are retrograde, stationary, or advancing, in population, the number of births will be less, equal to, or more than, the number of deaths; a very important piece of information, to be sure, and extremely difficult to be discovered!—Secondly, that any gap in population, occasioned by war, or famine, or plague, will soon be filled up, after the depopulating cause has ceased to act. A very important point in their internal economy!—Thirdly, that “all direct (say, unnatural) encouragements to marriage must cause an increased mortality, and that the prince or statesman, who should thus succeed in greatly increasing the number of marriages, might, perhaps, deserve more justly the title of Destroyer, than Father of his people;” consequently, that the epithet—Great, affixed to the names of warlike princes, &c. means Great Destroyers of their people; but Mr. M. takes care to avoid saying so.—Fourthly, that “the improved habits of cleanliness, which appear to have prevailed, of late years, in most of the towns of Europe, have, probably, more than counterbalanced their increased size.” Why we could not have learned all this from the most observing traveller, as well as from the Rev. Mr. Malthus’s library, we are not given to understand; nor whether we are to receive it as “a

view of the past and present effects of the principle of population."

Mr. M.'s assumed principal cause of human unhappiness, viz. the power of procreation, is left to prove itself to be so, for any thing to be found in this chapter; which, like its predecessors, is otherwise employed, either in proving common-place truisms, or in the statement of facts,—in arguments, and in reasonings not only irrelevant, but, frequently, even utterly subversive of the author's principal propositions.

## CHAPTER V.

### “ OF SWITZERLAND.”

“ THE situation of Switzerland is, in many respects, so different from the other States of Europe, and some of the facts that have been collected respecting it are so curious, and tend so strongly to illustrate the general principles of this work, that it seems to merit a separate consideration.” Indeed! if such be the case, they certainly merit a separate consideration; for, if those facts tend to illustrate the general principles of the Essay, &c. they are the first which have been yet produced, having any such tendency. The first part of the chapter is, however, devoted to prove the uncertainty of estimates of population, at different periods, from the number of the births at those periods; an object, of which we have an insuperable difficulty to find out the tendency to illustrate the general principles, &c.; but the proof of which few will require, although Mr. M. thinks it necessary to bring forward long-winded calculations for that pur-

pose, one part of which is commented on, as follows:—

“All these calculations of Mr. Muret seem to imply the operation of the preventive check to population, in a considerable degree, throughout the whole of the district under consideration; and there is reason to believe, that the same habits prevail in other parts of Switzerland, though varying considerably from place to place, according as the situation or the employment of the people render them more or less healthy, or the resources of the country make room, or not, for an increase.”

Be it remembered, that Mr. M. sets out with telling us, that he merely *supposes* the action of the check of moral restraint, and that the very admission of it contradicts the original principle of his work; it being only inserted in the latter editions for the purpose of softening some of the harshest conclusions of the first Essay. We may, also, here remark, *en passant*, that if those conclusions were correct, they required no softening; and, if incorrect, they should have been *expunged*, not softened.

The next fact we meet with is, that Mr. M. got in company with a Swiss peasant, who “understood the principle of population almost as well as any man he ever met with,” and who proved his knowledge, by informing Mr. M. “that a manufacture for the polishing

of stones had been established some years ago, which, for a time, had been in a very thriving state, and had furnished high wages and employment to all the neighbourhood; that the facility of providing for a family, and of finding early employment for children, had greatly encouraged early marriages; and that the same *habit* had continued, when, from a change of fashion, accident, and other causes, the manufacture was almost at an end."

Now, the foregoing fact illustrates our principles on this subject most completely; for we see, that if people are excited to increase, they will do so; and that it is impossible for any of the labouring classes to be *assured*, that they shall *never* need assistance from their countrymen; and, consequently, that Poor Laws are absolutely essential to the prosperity of a manufacturing country. How is a labourer, in any trade or manufacture, to foresee the failure of employment, "from accident, change of fashion, and other causes?" and if he cannot foresee it, how can he adopt the means of prevention? Is he to decline engaging in it unless previously assured of its permanency?

Which of Mr. M.'s principles are illustrated by this fact, we are rather at a loss to make out. We cannot perceive in it any description of evils resulting from the laws of God, or of the mitigation effected therein by human insti-

tutions. Perhaps Mr. M. has a much more piercing eye than we can pretend to, by which he sees light where we are 'quite in the dark ; if so, we trust that he will tell us, what particular principle of his is illustrated by the fact related by the peasant ? ' If among " the lower classes of people, in different parts, Mr. M. found many who saw the effects of early marriages, as affecting their own individual interests," it should, we think, have induced him to suppose, that the subject was not quite so abstruse as he had previously imagined it to be. " From the general ideas (says he) which I found to prevail on these subjects, I should by no means say, that it would be a difficult task to make the common people *comprehend*\* the principle of population, and its effects in producing low wages and poverty."

There is no difficulty in the case of comprehension of the effects of too early marriages ; but Mr. M., though assisted by all his clerical and professorial brethren, will be totally unable to persuade us, or our labouring brethren of England, Scotland, or Ireland, that their present distresses do not arise from enormous taxation and land-holders' corn-bills ; or that the tenth of the produce of the country paid to the State-clergy does not enhance the price of food

\* Query the meaning of " *comprehending* the principle of population."

and necessaries in the same proportion, while free importation is not permitted. Nor will it be an easy task to persuade the Catholic peasantry of Ireland, that neither taxation, nor their landlords and Anglo-Episcopalian dignitaries carrying off so large a portion of the annual surplus produce of their country to England and foreign lands, are, in any way whatever, the causes of the misery and poverty which they endure.

The next specimen of illustration, &c. is, that “the whole of the supply of funds for the poor being comparatively scanty and uncertain, it has not the same bad effects as the parish rates in England;”<sup>\*</sup> and yet he tells us, that “a habit of early marriages is the predominant vice of Switzerland!” We find no more facts, either curious, or illustrative of the author’s general principles; if, indeed, he have any such. How the assertion in the commencement of Mr. M.’s chapter on Switzerland has been borne out by the facts adduced, our readers are now able to judge for themselves; and, if they find any thing in it, or any other chapter of the volume, which tends to illustrate Mr. M.’s first general principle, viz. that “the power of procreation is the great

<sup>\*</sup> What bad effects result, and have resulted, from the poor rates in England, we shall find out by and bye, in the chapter “On the Checks to Population in England.”

cause of human unhappiness," or his fourth proposition, viz. that "vice and misery among mankind are the necessary and inevitable results of the laws of God, and the manner in which he has constituted mankind, which human institutions, instead of aggravating, have tended considerably to mitigate, though they cannot remove;"—we say, if they find any such, they will be more fortunate in the search than we have been. Indeed, we hardly recollect any instance of vice and misery, adduced by Mr. M. in the course of this review, for which he has not himself assigned very adequate causes, quite distinct from that of the power of procreation, and thereby deprived his theory of any shadow of support, which he might otherwise have contrived to draw from these instances.



## BOOK II.

*“Of the Checks to Population in the different States of Modern Europe.”*

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### CHAPTER VI.

“OF THE CHECKS TO POPULATION IN FRANCE.”

MR. Malthus here states, that he “should not have made this country the subject of a distinct chapter, but for a circumstance attending the revolution, which has excited considerable surprise. This is—the undiminished state of the population, in spite of the losses sustained during so long and destructive a contest.”

To all who believed, with us, that the power of increase, inherent in a population of twenty-six to thirty-six millions of people, is much more than able to make up the losses by the revolution, granting those losses to have been as great as its enemies asserted, or to those who have read

Mr. M.'s first volume, wherein the great power of increase, possessed by mankind, is very repeatedly shewn, no proof of the fact is necessary, nor can any feeling of surprise thereat have place.

It is Mr. M.'s great misfortune, that he is foolishly fond of making large extracts from his favourite authors; so that, whenever he gets into his library, and falls to extracting from his books of history, voyages, travels, tours, embassies, &c. &c., he never thinks of leaving off in time,—whereby, as in this case, it comes to pass, that, instead of merely extracting the accounts of the vice and misery which existed in France before the revolution, and those of the destruction during the revolution, and then attributing all those evils to the principle of population; he proceeds to extract the accounts of the causes of the vice and misery, and also those of the invaluable advantages derived from the revolution by the labouring classes in France! It is true, that such a proceeding enlarges the size of his book, and, to superficial readers, will not appear to be what, in truth, it is,—utterly subversive of the main principles and propositions therein stated and asserted.

Our search for the evils resulting from the principle of population in France, is as fruitless as those we have already made elsewhere; on the contrary, oppression of the labouring classes,

when not carried quite so far as to cause depopulation, appears, from the accounts of the condition of the peasantry before and since the revolution, and of Ireland, both in times past and present, to cause those classes, according to the degree and magnitude of the oppressions they suffer, to approximate to the state of irrational domesticated animals; because, being deprived of the motives to foresight, and the hope of acquiring the means of decent independence, they abandon themselves to sensual indulgence, without regarding any evil consequences which may follow; but, surely, oppression is the cause of the mischief! and, until its yoke be lightened or broken, no real diminution of those evils can be expected.

Respecting Spain, Mr. Malthus refers us to Townsend's Travels in that country, which reference indicates, pretty plainly, that no support of his asserted principles is to be expected from thence. Indeed, we doubt much whether monastic celibacy, a numerous rich clergy, swarms of grandees, and a despotic Government, administered by fools and villains, be among the best means of securing the virtue and happiness of the labouring classes in any country.

## CHAPTER VII.

### "OF ENGLAND."

Now we shall have a *demonstration* of "the bad effects of parish rates in England." Here it is—"The most cursory view of society in this country must convince us, that, throughout all ranks, the preventive check to population prevails in a considerable degree:"—so far, so well. The five pages devoted to prove this fact, we may pass over, except its concluding sentence—"it will be allowed, that the preventive check operates, with considerable force, throughout all the classes of the community." Who, besides Mr. M. *himself*, would think of contradicting this statement, by asserting, as he elsewhere does, that the preventive check is merely supposititious? The following paragraphs only require to be placed in juxta-position, in order that the calumny and falsehood of the accusation against the English poor laws, contained in the first of these paragraphs, may be rendered harmless by the accuser himself.

“ The love of independence is a sentiment that, surely, none would wish to see eradicated, though the poor laws\* of England, it *must* be confessed, are a system of all others the most calculated gradually to weaken this sentiment, and, in the end, will probably destroy it completely.” “ The annual marriages in England and Wales are, to the whole population, as 1 to 123½, a smaller proportion of marriages than is to be found in any of the countries which have been examined, except Norway and Switzerland.”

“ The smallness of the annual mortality, in proportion to the amount of the population, indicates a most *astonishing superiority* over the generality of other States, either in the *habits* of the people, with respect to *prudence* and *cleanliness*, or in the natural healthiness of situation. Indeed, it seems to be nearly ascertained, that *both* these causes, which tend to diminish mortality, operate in this country to a *considerable* degree. The *small proportion* of annual marriages, before-mentioned, indicates, that habits of *prudence*, extremely favourable to happiness, prevail through a large part of the community, *in spite* of the poor laws.” We set down the last six words of the paragraph to the account

\* For the words—“ poor laws,” substitute the words—“ excessive taxation and tithes,” which will, in all probability, render the whole paragraph quite true and correct.

of unproved assertion, and proceed to the next.

“Those who live single, or marry late, do not, by such conduct, contribute in any degree to diminish the actual population, but merely to diminish the proportion of premature mortality,—and, consequently, do not deserve reprehension on that account.”

“There is good reason to believe, that not only London, but the other towns in England, and probably, also, country villages, were, at the time of Dr. Price’s calculations (1759 to 1768) less healthy than at present.”

“The returns, pursuant to the Population Act, even after allowing for great omissions in the burials, exhibit, in all our provincial towns, and in the country, a degree of healthiness much greater than had before been calculated. We need not accompany Dr. Price in his apprehension, that the country will be depopulated by these emigrations to the towns,—at least, as long as the funds for the maintenance of agricultural labour remain unimpaired.”\*

“From all the data that could be collected, the proportion of births to the whole population of England and Wales has been assumed to be as 1 to 30; but this is a smaller proportion of births than has appeared, in the course

\* What queer notions of the nature of agricultural labour had the author in his head, when he penned the above sentence!

of this review, to take place in any other country, except Norway and Switzerland.—In countries circumstanced like America or Russia, or in other countries, after any great mortality, a large proportion of births is a favourable symptom; but, in the average state of a well-peopled territory, there cannot well be a worse sign than a large proportion of births, nor can there well be a better sign than a small proportion.”

“The number (of children) which survive the age of infancy, and reach manhood, will, in proportion to the number born, be almost invariably the greatest, where the proportion of births to the whole population is the least.—In this point, we rank next after Norway and Switzerland, which, considering the number of our great towns and manufactories, is certainly a *most extraordinary fact!*”—which can only be attributed to the beneficial tendency of the English poor laws, in spite of the abuses of those laws, by interested rent and tithe-receiving magistrates.

“As nothing can be more clear, than that all our demands for population are fully supplied, if this be done with a small proportion of births, it is a decided proof of a very small mortality,—a *distinction* on which we may *justly pride* ourselves. Should it appear, from future investigation, that I have made too great an allowance for

omissions, both in the births and in the burials, I shall be extremely happy to find, that the distinction, which, other circumstances being the same, I consider as the surest test of happiness and good government, is even greater than I have supposed it to be. In despotic countries (countries, where the poor are plundered and left to starve,) as in naturally unhealthy countries, the proportion of births to the whole population will generally be found very great."

"The returns of the Population Act, in 1811, undoubtedly presented extraordinary results. They shewed a greatly accelerated rate of progress, and a greatly improved healthiness of the people, notwithstanding the increase of the towns, and the increased proportion of the population engaged in manufacturing employments."

"In fact, the registers of births and deaths clearly shew an improvement in the healthiness of the country, and a diminution of mortality, progressively through the ten years (1801 to 1810); and while the average number of annual births increased from 263,000 to 297,000, or more than one-eighth, the burials increased only from 192,000 to 196,000, or one-forty-eighth."

So much for the horribly *disastrous, degrading, and demoralizing* effects of the English poor laws, and their calculated and practical



effects during nearly three centuries. Of these effects, we shall find more abundant assertions ere long.

The remainder of the chapter is made up of calculations, of which the following are stated as the results.

“The population, in 1810, compared with that of 1800, implies a less rapid increase than the difference between the two enumerations ; and it has further appeared, that the assumed proportion of births to deaths, as 47 to 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ , is rather below than above the truth. Yet, this proportion is *quite extraordinary*, for a rich\* and well peopled territory. It would add to the population of the country one seventy-ninth every year, and, were it to continue, would double the number of inhabitants in less than fifty-five years. This is a rate of increase which, in the nature of things, cannot be permanent. It has been occasioned by the stimulus of a greatly increased demand for labour, combined with a greatly increased power of production, both in agriculture and manufactures. These are the two elements necessary to form an effective encouragement to a rapid increase of population. A failure of either of those must

\* What idea the word *rich* is meant to convey, as used above, we are quite at a loss even to guess ; we should be inclined to think, that a rich territory would be more likely to admit an increase of its population than a poor one.

immediately weaken the stimulus, and there is but too much reason to fear the failure of one of them at present. But what has already taken place is a striking illustration of the principle (say power,) of population, and a proof that, in spite of great towns, manufacturing occupations, and the gradually acquired habits of an *opulent* and *luxurious* people, if the resources of a country will admit of a rapid increase, and if these resources are so *advantageously distributed*,\* as to occasion a constantly increasing demand for labour, the population will not fail to keep pace with them."

These are the concluding paragraphs of the chapter, and they certainly are of a curious species, as will more fully appear in the course of our examination. We are told in the latter paragraphs, that the "population has increased rapidly;" but, lest we should imagine that such rapid increase has been owing, solely, to the power of procreation, and consequently has introduced a horrible quantity of vice and misery in its train, Mr. M., with his usual *kindness* and *candour*, informs us, in the same breath, that it has been occasioned by the "*stimulus*

\* "*Advantageously distributed*;"—Yes, that is the thing! We have a great suspicion, indeed, that the resources of England are not quite so advantageously distributed as those of America, for producing a constantly increasing demand for productive labour.

(not of poor rates, nor of the principle of population, but) of a greatly increased demand for labour, combined with the two elements necessary to form an effective *encouragement* to a rapid increase of population!" Further, "these two necessary elements are the *power* of production in agriculture and manufactures,"—not the power of employing labour to put the manufacturing and agricultural powers of production in motion, and, thereby, to obtain or increase their productions, but merely the *power* of production; and the reverend author proceeds to predict, that there is but too much reason to fear the failure of one of these powers, (that of agriculture, we presume,) at present, (1817.) Weep, and howl, oh, ye farmers and agricultural labourers, and all ye other labourers, who live on the produce of the soil of England! ye are not liable to any distress from being forced to pay your share of the enormous national taxation, nor from your obligation to pay your war-rents in a sound metallic currency of 25 to 35 per cent. more value than the depreciated paper-money, in which you originally covenanted to pay them, nor from the burden of twenty-five millions of artificial rent annually payable to the landholders, and of ten per cent. on all your titheable subsistence to the state clergy—No,—but you are exposed to ruin and starvation, solely by a failure in the productive

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power of agriculture ! whether the Deity will effect this by smiting the ground with the curse of barrenness, or by placing wintry frosts in the lap of June or July, the prophet hath not, however, as yet revealed.

The next item in Mr. M.'s budget of knowledge is, that " what has already taken place is a striking illustration,"—of what ? of the evils resulting from the principle of population ? or of the poor laws ? Nay, nay,—it is merely a " striking illustration" of the power of procreation, which, in a country that ranks the third in Europe in point of health, has enabled its inhabitants, aided by the stimulus above described, to " add one seventy-ninth to their numbers every year !"

Respecting the evils resulting from the power of procreation in England, albeit their existence and greatness are most nobly and courageously assumed in the title-page ; yet, in this chapter, wherein we look for their full description and proof, not a single instance is adduced.—We begin to suppose, that Mr. M. imagines that all his readers, as well as himself and his brother-pastors of the state church, have received the Holy Ghost ; and, consequently, that they can find out these things by inspiration ; but he should have recollected, that we, poor Scots, having thrown the " pearl of preciosity" to the swine, are not likely to be favoured

with those divine gifts, which can only be derived through the laying on of a bishop's hand, to whom the stream has flowed direct from the reservoir at Rome; and, therefore, we trust that, in pity to our darkness and ignorance, Mr. M. will condescend to point out these evils and miseries in his next edition; and who knows but, that although we are at present too poor and self-conceited, yet, when we get rich enough, and humble enough, we may, in time, be induced to accept the so-often proffered blessings of church-of-Englandism.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### “ OF SCOTLAND AND IRELAND.”

NOTWITHSTANDING the greatness of our poverty, both in temporal and spiritual things, as acknowledged in the last chapter, yet, for the sake of Ireland, we heartily wish that her condition in all respects so nearly resembled ours, as that both countries, and the condition of their population, could be fairly classed under one head, when pursuing investigations of this nature.

In this chapter Mr. M. asserts, that “an examination, in detail, of the statistical accounts of Scotland would furnish numerous illustrations of the principle of population, but that he has already extended this part of the work so much, as to be fearful of tiring the patience of his readers ; and, therefore, shall confine his remarks in the present instance, to a few circumstances which have happened to strike him.” If, by numerous illustrations of the principles of population, he means numerous illus-

trations of the power of procreation, then he has, indeed, good and sufficient cause for his fear, since those who are not already convinced that mankind possess the power of increasing their numbers, under such circumstances as admit of and encourage its exertion, would not be convinced though one rose from the dead and declared it to them ; but, if he means—numerous illustrations of the evils resulting from the power of procreation, then we conjure him, by his love of fame, to enter on the “*examination in detail*,” without loss of time ; and, we hope, that he will also consider the great assistance which he may from thence derive, in the book-making line, as it will help to swell the next edition to four or five volumes, and furnish an additional quantity of dust to throw in the eyes of those who come under his lee.

In the meanwhile, we must examine into those few circumstances which have happened to strike the reverend author. “ I should naturally have thought, from the statistical accounts, that the tendency to marriage in Scotland was, upon the whole, greater than in England ;\* but if it be true, that the births and

\* Why Mr. Malthus should, on any account, have allowed himself to admit such a thought, after he had ascertained, that the poor laws of England are a system expressly calculated to produce frequency of improvident marriages, and that they have been in operation for nearly three centuries, we cannot divine, but must leave its explanation to himself.

deaths bear the same proportion to each other, and to the whole population in both countries, the proportion of marriages cannot be very different."

If the reader finds any thing very striking in this observation, other than its discordance with the author's assertions respecting the effects of the English poor laws, he will be more fortunate than we are.

"From a general view of the statistical accounts, the result seems clearly to be, that the condition of the lower classes of the people in Scotland has been considerably improved of late years. The price of provisions has risen, but almost invariably the price of labour has risen in a greater proportion, and it is remarked in most parishes, that more butcher's meat is consumed among the common people than formerly, that they are both better lodged, and better clothed; and, that their habits, with respect to cleanliness, are decidedly improved."

All these are, without doubt, very *interesting* circumstances; and could not but appear, to Mr. M.'s peculiarly constituted imagination, as very extraordinary, and very striking indeed. They will not, however, be thought strange by ordinary minds, who will consider, that, after centuries of misgovernment, and of internal and foreign wars, Scotland has enjoyed sixty years of domestic repose; during which time,



she has had such a tolerable degree of practical liberty and good government, as has enabled presbyterianism to develop its tendency to promote the temporal happiness of a people. "That a part of this improvement is, probably, to be attributed to the increase of the preventive or natural check," may be true enough, but the increase of the natural check itself, is owing to the progressive recovery of the country from the disastrous effects of feudalism, anarchy, and distress, which were principally occasioned by English proximity, tyranny, and connexion. If Scotland have improved, during the last thousand years, in the same degree that England has done, what a petty miserable handful her inhabitants must have been, in the period when they repelled the repeated attacks of the northern nations, who frequently overran, and twice entirely conquered England!

"That depopulation has taken place without the production of any other national advantage than the substitution of sheep for men," is a fact or circumstance so well known as not now to appear very *striking*. But we thank God, that the artificial system which tended to convert Scotland into a grazing park for feeding the overgrown monstrosity of manufacturing and monopolizing cities, has received a disorganizing blow by the partial return to a sound cur-

rence, and by the impossibility of carrying the loan system to a much greater extent.

“In the account of Delting in Shetland,\* it is remarked, that the people marry young, and are encouraged to this by the landlords, who wish to have as many men on their grounds as possible, to prosecute the ling fishing.”

But, if the “landlords have encouraged the people to marry young,” and if the population have increased too rapidly, is the evil of a redundant population, caused, in this case, by the aforementioned encouragements to marriage? or, by the natural tendency of the principle of population, to produce an impossibility?—Again,—“in most countries, the increase of population is reckoned an advantage, and justly. It is, however, the reverse in the present state of Shetland; the farms are split. The young men are encouraged to

\* “Zetland” does not come under the denominations of “the Western Isles and Highlands of Scotland,” and its internal state, customs, and manners, have, besides, been so dissimilar to those of the latter countries, as to render analogical reasoning, from one to the other, generally inadmissible. The parish of Delting, within the last thirty or forty years, has been made the scene of (we are happy to say) an unsuccessful experiment to substitute sheep for men, by its principal landholders. That the other landholders did endeavour to make room for the unhoused tenants, is no proof of their desire to have as many men on their grounds as possible, to prosecute the ling fishing.

marry, without having any stock. The consequence is, poverty and distress. It is believed, that there is, at present, in these islands, double the number of people that they can properly maintain." What a puny, starveling set of dwarfs the Zetlanders must be, from being brought up on half allowance!—what a wonder it is that they are so blinded that they cannot perceive their dwarfishness and feebleness, when placed by the side of Mr. M.'s English countrymen, of whom, the very "labouring classes are so accustomed to eat fine wheaten bread, &c., that they will submit to be half-starved, before they will submit to live like the Scottish peasants!" Or, perhaps, Mr. M. means that they are half starved only as compared with the "*opulent and luxurious* English people," who laudably employ themselves in executing the healthy and noble employment of turning their stomachs and bowels into living dunghills, for the speedy putrefaction and decomposition of the most costly meats and drinks.

Whether there be double the number of inhabitants in these islands, that they can properly maintain under the present system, we shall not dispute in this place; but we are perfectly sure, that there is not one-tenth of the number which they could properly maintain, if relieved from the restrictions under which they are placed,—restrictions which do

not much benefit those for whose advantage they are imposed ; but very effectually prevent these islanders from benefiting by the resources which their country and its adjacent seas afford. English landholders make corn-bills, in order that the labourers of the united kingdom may starve, rather than be allowed to purchase and eat foreign grown corn ; and as these English landholders will not take fish from the Zetlander, in exchange for their corn,\* at a price, proportionate to the advanced price of that corn, he is, therefore, debarred from procuring it in sufficient quantity. If he carry his salt fish to the Baltic, to the Mediterranean, to Africa, or to the East or West Indies, &c. &c., either corn or taxation laws prohibit him from bringing home the proceeds in the produce of those countries.—No ; he must bring it to some *privileged* port of Great Britain or Ireland, and there sell it ; and incur port charges, agency, and all the impositions to which strangers are subject, besides paying an half or two-thirds of their value to government, in taxes upon it, and return home with his remaining proceeds invested in British corn, &c., at a loss of an hundred or two hundred per cent.

Smuggling into Britain is much easier to ac-

\* Which, indeed, they can hardly be expected to do, when we know that their labourers are so accustomed to eat fine wheaten bread, &c. &c.

comply from the opposite continent than from Zetland; yet revenue-laws are imposed, regarding timber, hemp, salt, &c. &c., which fetter the energies of the inhabitants, and reduce them to be mere lookers-on, while they see from their doors, thousands of foreign vessels acquiring the value of some millions of pounds sterling, on their coasts; they also participate, with their fellow citizens, the disadvantage of having absentee landholders. It is said, that a Yorkshire lord, among others, draws from the produce of their labour, a few hundred pounds annually—for what benefit conferred on them by him, his ancestors, or his predecessors, the annals of the country may, doubtless, shew, but we cannot, because of our ignorance.

Every species of national taxation, (not excepting that which is paid for the purpose of supporting the tea-monopoly in Leadenhall street,) is rigorously levied on those islanders, although the whole amount of some of those taxes does not pay the salaries of its collectors. Their islands do not produce a stick of timber, or a pound of hemp, required for the repair and construction of their fishing-boats, cottage-roofs, agricultural implements, fishing-lines, nets, ropes, &c.; but, nevertheless, they must not import any from Norway, which is not a day's sail distant from their shores, nor from the Baltic, unless they can pay the enor-

mous duties imposed on Norway and Baltic produce, for the artificial and exclusive benefit of English landholders, and of temporary British, but permanent American, interests, in Canada and its dependencies. These poor people have, this very year, been reduced to extreme distress, by paying from six to seven shillings per thirty-two pounds of oat-meal imported from Scotland, while they could have imported it from Poland at two shillings per thirty-two pounds. No wonder, indeed, that they are half starved; but they will never believe that the principle of population is the cause of their misery, till all unnecessary restrictions and impositions are removed, and they are left to make the most of the natural advantages of their country, that is to say, are left at liberty to sell wherever they can sell dearest, and to buy wherever they can buy cheapest, without surrendering the greatest part of the proceeds to government in the shape of duties, for the purpose of increasing English landholders' revenue, and making the labourers of the country pay the interest of the debt contracted to the monied interest, under the name of National Debt.

It is said, that the fish and fishing vessels' bounty, now paid to these islanders in common with the rest of the imperial fishermen, is to be presently reduced in amount, and soon with-

held altogether—but, if corn bills be defensible only on the grounds of policy, then the fishing vessel and fish bounty is equally so, not only at its present, but at double its present rate; to which it ought to be raised, ere the fishermen can be equally protected, with the landlords, from the effects of taxation. If free importation and exportation be not, or cannot be, conceded to these islanders, they ought, in that case, on considerations of justice and policy, to have a bounty granted and continued to them, of double that which is granted and continued to the British and Irish fishers—that is to say, the present bounty should be doubled to all the other fishermen, and quadrupled to the Zetlanders.

Were these unnecessary and pernicious restrictions attempted to be abolished, the “dog-in-the-manger” class would, no doubt, set up a tremendous roar, and predict the most doleful consequences, as they have always done at the proposal of every wise, just, and liberal measure adopted by government; but they should certainly be disregarded, after having been so often proved false prophets and liars.

It is a most disgraceful thing for the Londoners, that they are always among the foremost in clamoring for the preservation and extension of commercial privileges and monopolies, which, after all, can confer no permanent advan-

tages upon them individually, except they could exclude the influx of capital and labour, which, consequently, flows in from the provinces. We think that the situation of London, in the heart of a fertile country, and seated on the banks of a noble river, and being, moreover, the seat of government and the focus of its vast expenditure, ought to satisfy men of common avarice and common impudence; and that it must require something uncommonly brassy to furnish out the requisite assurance for calling on government, to starve the provinces for its imaginary advantage.

Returning to Mr. M., we find him observing, that "the island of Jura (one of the Celtic isles) appears to be absolutely over-flowing with inhabitants, in spite of constant and numerous emigrations. Such a swarm of inhabitants, where manufactures and many other branches of industry are unknown, are a very great load upon the proprietors, and useless to the State." Here Mr. M. does *not* assign any cause for the existence of the redundant population, which is a very unusual case with him; we have, however, very little doubt, that some artificial excitement or other does exist, or has existed, in Jura, sufficient to account for these circumstances.

We have our doubts of the truth of the asser-



tion, that they "are a very great load on the proprietors," because, we think it not unlikely, that a very fair proportion of those proprietors would, in that case, have little hesitation to adopt the means so successfully used in Sutherlandshire, viz. fire and sword, for getting quit of their load. We should like to know the reason why they could be "useless to the State," at a time when the said State proffered high bounties to soldiers and sailors, and obliterated every rational idea of freedom, by the compulsion of the latter into its service, on its own terms.

We will assert, at a venture, because we have not, just now, access to the means of verifying our supposition, that the filling of the villages of the parish of Callander, &c. with "naked and starving crowds of people, who were pouring down for shelter, or for bread," was owing to some artificial cause or other, quite different from that of the power of procreation.

In the statistical report of the parish of Elgin, Mr. M. observes, that the births are to the deaths as 70 to 15, or 4½ to 1; and (probably with truth) observes, that "such an extraordinary proportion of births is caused, evidently, by habits of emigration, and shews the extreme difficulty of depopulating a country merely by taking away part of its people."

"Take but away its industry, and the sources

of its subsistence, (by tyrannical taxation, or the substitution of sheep for men,) and it is done at once."

We need not here notice the attack on the English poor laws, commencing at page 120, further than to observe, that if "the condition of the poor of England, in comparison with that of the poor of other countries, be truly most miserable," we see not wherein consists the encouragement held out to the increase of their population by the poor laws. We verily believe, that, without caring about, or "being thoroughly aware of, the principle of population," as asserted in Mr. M.'s theory, "nothing can be more [just, or more politic, as well as more] natural, than the proposal of an assessment to which the uncharitable, as well as the charitable, should be made to contribute, according to their abilities, and which might be increased or diminished, according to the wants of the moment."\*

\* The following extract from the *Glasgow Chronicle*, as copied into the *Morning Herald*, 7th September, 1824, may be considered as an exemplification of the necessity of poor laws in any country which aspires to obtain a decent and numerous manufacturing population.

"Mr. and Mrs. Cain still continue to get a number of visitors to see their recovered child. In the course of his search, the father often travelled through the dreary moors all night, that he might reach the towns and villages in the morning, before the lodging houses were cleared of their contents.

As the principal causes of the famines experienced by Scotland, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, she may truly point out Romish and English Episcopacy; but the latter in particular. Political causes were not wanting for some of those famines which occurred in the course of the eighteenth; nevertheless, it may be assumed as certain, that, had there been an assessment, to which the uncharitable as well as the charitable should have contributed, much of the distress produced by those famines would, at least, have been greatly alleviated.

The next piece of information with which we are favoured is, that "it is remarked, also, in some parishes, that the number of births and marriages are affected by years of scarcity and plenty." This *striking* circumstance, if it be one, would seem to imply, that the exertion of

He says, the number of mendicants is quite incredible. He has found thirty or forty houses choked full of them from all quarters. When he came upon them early in the morning, he has seen them huddled together in the most disgusting manner, and the examination of their various children was often a matter of no small difficulty."

Since the clergy are the great leaders in the attacks on the poor laws, we suggest, that no poor rate be levied of them for the future, but that all the mendicants found in their respective parishes should receive a written direction, to call on the tithe-receivers for what Mr. Malthus terms—"casual benevolence."

the power of procreation is very dependant on circumstances, which is an inference rather unfavourable to the principal assumptions of the Essay; nor does it suit very well with the assertion in the Chapter on Switzerland, that "early marriages become a habit." The evils resulting from the principle of population are not stated, in this chapter, any more than in all the rest; and, if they are not to be found in the work at all, which we now strongly suspect, then Mr. M., when he wrote the title page to his Essay, must have had, and consequently may still have, an abundance of extracts by him, sufficient to make up the next edition to five or six volumes; if so, we hope he will soon favour the world with their publication.

Of Ireland, we believe that Mr. M. does, in his heart, think with us, that the least said will be the soonest mended. Potatoes are charged, conjunctively with the *ignorance* and *barbarism* of the people, as having caused all the mischief. We differ most widely from Mr. M. on the potato cause, and believe, that its extended cultivation has been one of the principal causes why, of late years, famines have neither been so frequent nor so destructive as formerly, and that its introduction was among the greatest benefits derived by Europe from the discovery of America.

That potatoes have enabled the Irish to in-

crease their numbers, is true; but that they would now have been much happier, and more virtuous, if potatoes had never been heard of, remains to be proved; *probably*, however, the priestly rage against the helpless potato may be accounted for, from the very circumstance of its having enabled the Irish to increase their numbers.

The church of England priests have often set up a tremendous cry of danger, when there was none; but we are inclined to think, that the truly apostolical Irish branch of that most pure church is not quite so safe now, with five or six millions of enemies, as when it had but one million and a half, as, it is said, was the case a century or so back.

If the Irish are really ignorant and barbarous, it is a most astonishing matter, because the Irish State church being, in proportion to the population, the richest in the world, it is, of course, natural to be inferred, that the people are more civilized, and possess knowledge and happiness in a greater degree than any other nation on the face of the earth. If the fact, however, be as stated by Mr. M., we can only observe on it, that we never doubted, that if men were reduced to the condition of brutes, they would act suitably to their situation in most, if not all, respects.

As for the description and proofs of the

**“evils resulting from the principle of population in Ireland, those necessary and inevitable results,” &c. &c., they are still in Mr. M.’s workshop, for here they are not; nor do we think it would be of any use to search for them elsewhere, this being the last chapter of the review.**

## CHAPTER IX.

### “ON THE FRUITFULNESS OF MARRIAGES.”

IN commencing this chapter, the author states, that “It would be extremely desirable to be able to deduce, from the rate of increase, the actual population, and the registers of births, deaths, and marriages, in different countries, the real prolificness of marriages, and the true proportion of the born which lives to marry.—The problem, although, perhaps, not capable of an accurate solution, yet will admit of some approximation towards it.” These extremely desirable deductions, which are obtainable from twenty pages of the work, are summed up as follows :—“These instances will be sufficient to shew the mode of applying the rules which have been given, in order to form a judgment of the prolificness of marriages, and the proportion of the born which lives to marry.” Now, all these may be useful and desirable in some way or other ; but how they shew what the evils are, which result from the power of

procreation, we really cannot perceive. We are further told, that the average proportion of births to marriages, in Europe, is four to one ; —and that, as the population of Europe is increasing, the prolificness of marriages *must* be *greater* than four to one !—and, also, that “ to occasion so rapid a progress as has taken place in America, it will, indeed, be necessary, that *all* the causes of increase should be called into action ;” and yet, the author elsewhere in his work states, that population *may* increase much faster than it has done in America ! How can this be if *all* the causes have been in operation ?

The next assertion we meet with is, that “ there can be little doubt, that the preventive check (of moral restraint) prevails most in towns.” If so, it prevails most where it is the least understood.—Vide pages 385-6, and 491 to 495, of volume first of the Essay. Some observations in the notes on this chapter tend to throw a degree of doubt on the asserted rate of American increase from procreation alone, which we believe the author had better not have inserted.

The Eulerian tables do not shew what evils result from the power of procreation ; therefore, this chapter must be dismissed in the same way as the others.



## CHAPTER X.

### “EFFECTS OF EPIDEMICS ON REGISTERS OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES.”

THIS chapter, as may be inferred from its title, does not contain any new facts or observations really calculated to bear on the main subject of the Essay, &c. &c.; as such, our examination will be confined to a few of the author's most prominent conclusions.

“It will, therefore, appear (says he) how liable we should be to err, in assuming a given proportion of births, for the purpose of estimating the past population of any country; writers on these subjects have been too apt to form calculations for past and future times, from the proportion of a few years.” All this may be admitted; but what evils does it prove to have resulted from the laws of God? or, how much use does the author make of the assistance derivable therefrom, in the “investigation of the causes of human unhappiness, and the means of their removal?”

“ In contemplating the plagues, and sickly seasons, which occur in these tables, (for Prussia and Lithuannia, from 1692 to 1757—Dukedom of Pomerania, 1694 to 1757—Brandenburgh, 1697 to 1757—Newmark of Brandenburgh, from 1695 to 1756—Dukedom of Magdeburgh, 1692 to 1756—Principality of Halberstadt, 1688 to 1756), after a period of rapid increase, it is impossible not to be impressed with the idea, that the number of inhabitants had, in these instances, exceeded the food and accommodations necessary to preserve them in health.”

However impossible it may seem to Mr. M., yet we must assure him, that our hard skulls cannot receive the impression which he would wish ; and we think, that any person who has an adequate idea of the destruction of the means of human subsistence, by war and ignorant despotism, and who has studied the history of Germany, during the periods above-stated, will see abundant reason to *imagine* the existence of more causes for those epidemics than the author allows. It will be perceived, that “ the falling short of the means of subsistence and accommodation,” was only the secondary cause, or the effect of certain primary causes, which the author has not investigated ; but, however it may suit the purpose and aim of his work, to assign effects in lieu of ultimate

causes, it will be wrong in us to admit them. With respect to "the Highlands of Scotland," we must again put the question to Mr. M., if any unnatural excitements have been, or are, held out to the increase of population, and it becomes in consequence redundant,—Whether will the vice and misery, thereby produced, be chargeable on those who offered those excitements, or on the exertion of the power of procreation consequently induced?

END OF VOL. I.

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